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SYRIA AND THE HOLY LAND.

SYRIA AND THE HOLY LAND,

THEIR SCENERY AND THEIR PEOPLE.

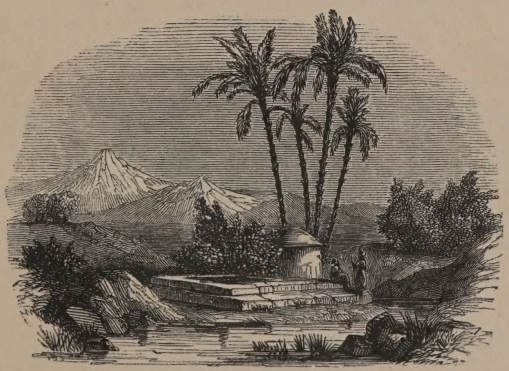
Incidents of Travel, &c.

FROM THE BEST AND MOST RECENT AUTHORITIES.

BY

WALTER KEATING KELLY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



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ERRATA.

Page 49, 14 lines from bottom, for *right*, read *rite*.
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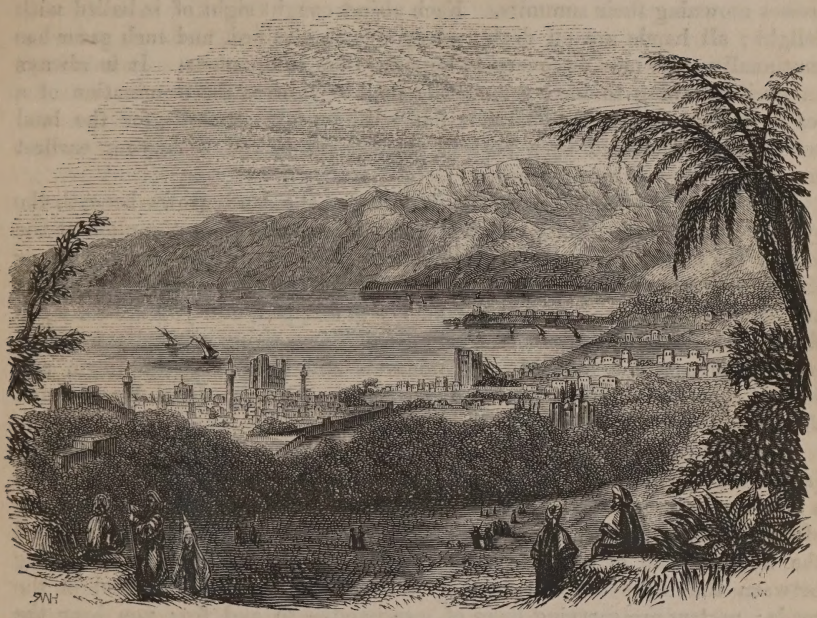

Beyroot from the South.

SYRIA AND THE HOLY LAND.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival in Syria.—Remarks on the country.—Beyroot.—Its inhabitants.—Life in the streets.—Turning an honest penny.—Scenes and incidents witnessed in the winter of 1840-1.—Christian and Moslem monks and saints.

THE traveller, whose good fortune it has been to make his first approach to Syria by sea, and to land at Beyroot, must always esteem it a happy coincidence that the most frequented port on all the coast is likewise precisely the point where a man of taste and quick feeling would choose to receive his first impressions of the country. Long before the vessel nears the shore, the sunlit peaks and wavy ridges of Lebanon are seen marking the blue sky, while its sides are hid from sight by the haze upon the waters; by and by the craggy masses of the mountain come forth like airy promontories; the eye gradually distinguishes the deep and dark valleys that cleave its flanks; the rocky crests assume a bolder outline; and you half discern

villages scattered on the mountain sides, and monasteries like feudal fortresses crowning their summits. Each object caught sight of is hailed with delight; all hands are on deck; every eye is strained, and each gazer has continually some new discovery to impart to his companions. It is always an exciting thing to have a mountain land in view as the termination of a sea voyage; but here the charm is felt with tenfold strength, for the land before you is endeared by a host of associations linked with your earliest and most hallowed recollections.

Meanwhile, the vessel holds on its course; the land grows beneath the eye; the white walls of the country houses, spread all along the plain at the foot of the mountain, peep out with a look of welcome from between their clustering trees, and the air is loaded with the perfumed breath of orange and lemon blossoms. At last the anchor is dropped, and you are riding in the bay of Beyroot, in front of a long promontory, rising gradually from the water, above which are seen the minarets and towers of the town, and beyond them the summits of the Jebel Sunnin, and the Jebel Kneese, and the long lines of the Jebel el Drus.

If you have the good fortune to escape being condemned to quarantine (supposing that any is still enforced), a boat conveys you a distance of about a mile to the *marina,* or quay, thronged with Arabs in all the gay diversity of their picturesque costumes and bristling weapons. The scene exhibits all the lively bustle of a European sea-port. Boats are continually plying between the shore and the trading vessels from Europe anchored in the roads; porters are carrying bales of merchandise to and fro; you hear the shrill cries of the Arabs wrangling on the quay, and the uncouth and dismal sounds uttered by the camels as they are made to kneel down to be loaded. Before you can step out of your boat on the wet sands, you are caught up by some bare-legged Arabs, who carry you in their arms to the entrance of a narrow, gloomy street, built on the side of a rapid slope. Everything about you gives you indisputable assurance that you are treading on Eastern ground.

Your officious friends now beset you with a clamorous demand for *bucksheesh,bucksheesh!* perhaps at the same time significantly rubbing together the tips of their thumbs and fore-fingers. You gather from this pantomime, that *bucksheesh* is Arabic for those familiar sounds of Frangistan, "summat to drink," "pourboire," "trinkgeld;" and having thus learned the first word of a new vocabulary, you need not fear that you will be allowed to let it slip very soon from your memory.

And now that we are fairly landed, it will be expedient that we call to mind some general facts respecting the country in which we are about to sojourn, before we begin to explore it in detail.

The name of Syria is, in modern times, applied to the country bounded by the Mediterranean on the west, by the Euphrates and the Desert on the east, and extending from the confines of Mount Taurus on the north, to about the thirty-first parallel of northern latitude, where it meets Arabia Petræa, and the Syro-Egyptain Desert. Thus defined, it of course includes ancient Phœnicia and the Holy Land within its limits. On turning to the map, we observe that this space consists essentially of little more than a range of mountains, a long narrow isthmus between a watery and an arid

sea. The great central ridge, the back-bone as it were of the land, may be followed almost without an interruption, from its entry by the north, quite into Arabia. It first runs close to the sea, from the borders of ancient Cilicia to the Orontes; and after opening a passage to that river, recedes a little from the shore, and stretches in a continuous chain of summits as far as the sources of the Jordan, where it divides and encloses the valley of that river, and the basins of its three lakes. In its course it detaches from this line, as from a main trunk, numerous ramifications, some of which vanish in the Desert, where they form various enclosed hollows, such as those of Damascus and the Haouran; while others, advancing to the sea, frequently end in steep declivities, as at Carmel, Nakoura, Ras-el-Abiad, or the White Cape, and along much of the extent from Beyroot to Tripoli; but in general they gently terminate in plains, such as those of Antioch, Tripoli, Tyre, and Acre.

There is not, perhaps, in the world a country so remarkable as Syria for the lustre of its early glories, the vicissitudes of its fortunes, and the blood that has drenched its soil. Its admirable fertility, the variety and beauty of its climate, and its advantageous position in the very heart of the ancient world, rendered it the chosen abode of early commerce and civilisation; but these very advantages excited the ambition of conquerors, and many a time brought down on Syria the desolating ravages of war.

The traveller treads at every step on the remains of perished cities, and of monuments of art and industry that testify the vast population, the wealth, energy, and grandeur of the land in days gone by. To Syria we owe the origin of our written characters; here commerce and navigation began their humanising career, and a multitude of useful arts and discoveries had birth, or were carried to the highest degree of perfection; and—infinitely more momentous thought to the Christian—here was prepared, developed, and consummated, that stupendous series of events on which he rests his hopes for eternity.

Formerly one of the earliest abodes of almost all religions, Syria still teems with their mute memorials or their living representatives. On the eastern side of the hills of Jordan, and over the plains of Manasseh and Gad, are found monuments apparently of Buddhist origin. They resemble those of the Druid age in England, and carry us back in imagination to the times when the adventurous ships of Tyre and Sidon transplanted into that remote island the elements of civilisation and a hierarchical polity.* It would be erroneous to suppose that Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism monopolise the land between them; the Anzary Mountains still shelter in their fastnesses the rites and the descendants of ancient Paganism; there still subsist in Syria the mysterious initiations of the *Druse*, the infamous rites of the *Ismeylee*, the adoration of the devil by the *Yezeedee*, and the practical pantheism of the *Koord;* whilst, in a part of Sechem,

* "The languages of antiquity," says Mr. Farren, (Letter to Lord Lindsay) "are the living tongues of Syria, and in their compounds is still familiar the name of Britain, derived from Phœnician origin." *Beret anic*, he says, would imply in Arabic, "the land of tin," tantamount to the Cassiterides of Herodotus; and he is inclined to think that the name Νησοι Βρεταννικαι is derived from it.

or the modern Naplous, three-and-twenty families, descended from the revolted tribes, preserve their ancient Pentateuch, and still offer upon Gerizim the rites and sacrifices of the Samaritan worship.

It would seem, as though by a perpetual law, Syria were peculiarly marked out as an arena whereon to determine mighty issues, such as involve the destinies of mankind at large. How often has the lot of empires and nations been decided there, from the gray dawn of time down to our own days! Jews, Assyrians, Chaldæans, Macedonians, Romans, Saracens, Western Christians, Tatars, Turks, and Egyptians, have all left their bones to bleach upon this common battle-ground of the nations. It was the resistance offered to Napoleon, by the petty fortress of Acre, which rolled back on Europe the tide of conquest that otherwise had swept over Asia.

Syria is estimated to contain about 50,000 square miles. It is a country whose population bears no proportion to its superficies; and the inhabitants may be considered, on the most moderate calculation, as reduced to a tithe of what the soil could abundantly maintain under a wiser system of administration. Their numbers are probably much below two millions; and they form an assemblage of tribes rather than a people; for they are not only destitute of every principle of national association, but denaturalised from such a relation by the reciprocal antipathies of their respective castes. The Jew loathes the Samaritan, though of his own lineage, and has no sympathy in common with any other class. The Greeks and Maronites, and the Syrian, Latin, and schismatic churches, though of one origin in Christianity, and equally oppressed, hate their rulers less than they do each other. The Metowali and the Sonnite alike acknowledge the mission of Mohammed, but are reciprocally regarded as heretics and infidels; and they, the Druse and Anzary, the Arab, Turk, and European, all seem to vie in perpetuating the virulence of their ancestral schisms, and each class lives in distinct and recognised habits of separation from all others. This is the fatal weakness of the land; this it is that renders it the ready dupe and victim of the conqueror's policy,—"divide and govern"—and that keeps down within such narrow limits the suffering population of one of the regions of the earth the most favoured by nature.

In the earliest historic times of which mention is made in the Bible, each canton of Syria had its *kings*, a sort of chieftains ruling over a small district and a certain number of families, just as the sheykhs or heads of tribes do at this day. The system of government was patriarchal, resembling the authority of the head of a family. This is one instance out of a host that might be adduced to show how little change the march of ages has made in the manners, customs, and usages of the East. The Bible presents us with a multitude of social and domestic traits, and even with names of places, provinces, and families that have never varied during thousands of years. In its venerable pages we have the clearest, fullest, and most vivid of all exponents of the springs and action of Eastern life; and he who has not carefully studied its records need never hope to read aright any other book treating of these matters.

"The dress of the people of Syria," says Mr. Farren, "the customs of

society, the idiom of thought, the salutations of courtesy—all are living records of remote ages; nor can a more striking illustration be adduced than that which presented itself to me, when on approaching Bethlehem, the aged inhabitants, with tears and lamentations, came out and met me, to beseech my intercession on the cruel oppression then inflicted on them; and, 1800 years after the memorable record of that custom, they strewed their abayes (cloaks) and garments in my path, which, with my suite, I literally rode over; while my heart beat, and my eyes were bathed with tears, at such a memorial of past ages, amidst such a scene of present wretchedness."

Beyroot is a place of great antiquity, having given its name to Baal Berith, a Phœnician deity, to whom there was a temple here; Augustus made it a Roman colony, and called it after his daughter, Colonia Felix Julia. It still asserts, by the beauty of its scenery, its admirable climate, and the fertility of its environs, its ancient claim to the epithet of *Happy;* but it presents few architectural remains of the greatness it attained to under the emperors, one of whom, Justinian, styled it "the nurse of the law," and conferred on it, in conjunction with Rome and Constantinople, the exclusive right to have professors, who should expound the Roman jurisprudence. Some faint trace of the magnificent baths and theatre, erected by Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, may still be seen on the north of the town: portions of tessellated pavements and shafts of columns are found in the gardens and along the sea-shore; and a great part of the quay facing the harbour is constructed of fragments of pillars, some of which appear to have been of the largest kind, and highly finished. Though these remains are of little value in the eyes of the antiquary, they may, as old Sandys has it, "instruct the pensive beholder with their exemplary frailtie."

Fountain near Beyroot.

The modern town is built on the ancient site, and is of an irregular square form, open towards the sea, and enclosed on three sides towards the land by walls of considerable height and thickness, which, with their square towers, constitute a picturesque framework for the town; but as the latter is commanded by the neighbouring heights, the soft sandstone walls would prove but a feeble defence against artillery. So exceedingly massive, however, is the construction of the houses within the town, that, in the opinion of Colonel Napier, it would be no easy matter to do the latter any very serious damage. The old castle by the sea-side, and the consular buildings facing the marina, he admits were "touched up" a little, but otherwise no injury

was done by the late bombardment, for the allies were careful to direct their fire only against the positions occupied by the Egyptian forces.

On some of the towers there are a few paltry iron cannons, most of them without carriages. They are now and then used for the purpose of saluting pashas, and other high personages, on their entry into the city, and to announce to the true believers the return of the great annual fast and festival, the Ramadan and Beiram. The walls have five gates, which are closed after sunset, and no one is allowed to appear in the streets after dark without a lantern. Europeans, at least, will not feel tempted to infringe against this judicious regulation; for even, with his lantern in his hand, the stranger finds it anything but pleasant to grope his way through the rayless and dirty mazes. The streets are of little width; projections overhang the narrow irregular way, which sometimes runs for a considerable distance through tunnels, as it were, formed by the junctions of the opposite dwellings over head, and looking as if cut out of the solid masonry. On each side there is a raised causeway for foot-passengers, badly paved, or rather laid with large stones, and a deep channel in the middle for animals, in which water often runs. Unfortunately, even running water is not always pure; that which runs through these channels is generally very filthy. After all, a sewer of any kind, even though it be above ground, is a distinction of which few Turkish towns can boast, and should be respected accordingly.

The flat-roofed houses are all of equal height, and have hardly any external windows; they are all uniform likewise in colour, being built of a foxy yellow stone, and the house is scarcely distinguishable in hue from the rock on which it stands. The three or four minarets of the town are scarcely a third so high as those of Constantinople, but they are quite as thick, which gives them a clumsy, stumpy appearance. One could fancy that the Arab masons had found their work too warm for them, and so instead of continuing to build twice as much higher, and then setting up a slender spire at the top of the shaft, they had all at once cut short the job, and finished it with a heavy and nearly flat roof. Altogether, the solid aspect of the whole town reminds us that its last founders were men who had need of making every building in it a fortress, whilst the Christian galleys were cruising in the Levant, ever on the watch to pounce upon any vulnerable point exposed by Islam.

Beyroot, including the suburbs, contains from 12,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, of whom fully two-thirds are Christians, many of them Franks, missionaries, and merchants. The round hats and short coats of these gentry seem very much out of place in an Oriental city. Probably one-third of the population live without the walls, in what are called the Gardens: these are suburbs extending for several miles round the town, and consisting of detached houses, pleasantly encompassed with plantations of the mulberry, the almond, and the olive.

The harbour is a bad one, and ships generally anchor in the bay about a mile from the town; but Beyroot is the port of Damascus and of the Druses and Maronites of Lebanon, the most industrious inhabitants of Syria; indeed it is the only port of any security between Alexandria and the pestilential Gulf of Scanderoon; its trade has therefore increased very considerably within the last twelve or fifteen years, and improvements have

been begun in it that are rarely seen in any other towns of the country. Old houses have been pulled down, and new and more commodious dwellings erected in their places; streets have been widened by the removal of old buildings; a considerable portion of the town has been paved; dwelling-houses and stores, built on speculation, have quickly found occupiers; and rents have rapidly increased.

In every Eastern town, the stranger desirous of seeing "life in the streets," turns his steps to the bazaars, where all the retail trade is carried on, and where all who have business, and all who have none, are continually congregated. If the visitor looks in Beyroot for bazaars answering to the description of those of Constantinople, Cairo, or Damascus, he will of course be disappointed; but if his expectations are more moderate, he will derive much pleasure from the animated and picturesque scenes exhibited in the thronged marts even of this little city. People of all ranks and conditions, clad in all the costumes of the country, are incessantly coming and going; priests, dervishes, Maronites, Druses, Turks and Arabs, Armenians and Jews; women like sheeted ghosts, and slaves of both sexes, black, brown, and white, pass in review before him. He finds an endless fund of amusement in watching the occupations, attitudes, and gestures of the ever-changing groups that mingle and cross each other in every direction: the most trivial circumstances of their every-day habits are full of novelty for him. He will not fail, for instance, to be struck with their extraordinary attachment to the sitting, or rather squatting posture, with their heels tucked under them. With them almost every occupation is sedentary; you may see the blacksmith sitting and hammering his iron; the carpenter sitting and hewing his wood, or planing his plank; and the women sitting and washing their clothes. It is for the sake of being able to reach every article of their stock without standing up, that the merchants carry on their business in little shops not more than five or six feet square. You are not surprised to see the tailor sitting cross-legged; he does so all the world over; but the Eastern tailor does not even quit his shopboard to measure you, but, stretching out his arm, takes your dimensions with a plummet and line.*

Street Scene.

Formerly, the costume was enough of itself to mark the creed of him who wore it; but some change took place in this respect, under the Egyptian

* Three weeks in Palestine. London, 1842.

domination, and possibly some time may elapse before things return exactly to their old footing, if ever they do so return. Under the government of the pashas delegated by the Porte, the Christians, for instance, had been retained in a state, not of oppression, but of humiliation; they could only dress in certain prescribed sombre colours, and they were prohibited from wearing white, red, and green in their turbans. In some cities of peculiar sanctity they were not allowed to ride, except on asses, and they were even compelled to go barefooted when they passed before certain mosques. When a pasha traverses the streets or the bazaars, the crowd falls back on each side to make way for him, and every one waits motionless till the great man salutes; upon the pasha's placing his hand on his breast, and saying *marhaba*, the crowd *takes up* the salute by bowing low, and each man putting his hand to his mouth and to his forehead. The Christians were obliged to remain motionless on these occasions, and were forbidden, as well as the Jews, to *take up* or appropriate to themselves the salute of a pasha. All these humiliating distinctions were put an end to by the Egyptians. The Christians availed themselves of their new privileges with avidity, and even with an intemperate exultation, the natural result of so sudden a reaction in their favour. It is to be feared they will long feel the painful effects of the jealousy and indignation kindled in the minds of the Moslems by their short-lived triumph.

The great variety of sects and creeds assembled in Beyroot is nowhere more strikingly observable than in the bazaar. If it rarely happens that all the shops are open, on the other hand it would be almost as extraordinary a circumstance to find them all closed on any one day. It is always holiday with some portion or another of the population, and workday for the rest. Three out of the seven days in the week are Sabbaths: Friday for the Moslems, Saturday for the Jews, and Sunday for the Christians. Besides this, the United and Schismatic Greeks, the Maronites, and the Armenians, keep so many Saints' Days, that the merchants and the poor artisans who earn their bread day by day, are consequently defrauded of much valuable time. But, indeed, time is a commodity nowhere jealously prized in the East.

The law of Mohammed does not oblige its votaries to remain inactive on Friday; all it requires of them for that day is, that they attend midday prayers at the mosque, leaving them free to follow their worldly business at all other hours. Throughout the week, excepting Friday, the Moslem says the five daily prayers in his house or shop, or in the mosque, as may be most convenient to him, but less frequently in the latter place than elsewhere. Men of the lower orders oftener frequent mosques than those who have a comfortable home, and a mat or carpet upon which to pray. Hence, when the hour of prayer is announced from the minaret, the Moslem merchants may be seen performing their ablutions, and kneeling down in their shops, regardless of all the bustle around them. During the other hours of the day they sit crosslegged on their carpets, smoking their pipes, or conversing with their acquaintances or customers. If the merchant be not engaged in any of these ways, he does not whistle or sing, for want of thought, like the unclean Christian dogs, but spouts a chapter of the Koran loud enough for all who pass to hear him, or counts his chaplet, repeating with every bead one of the ninety-nine epithets of God. But the pipe is his great resource;

it gives him something to do, without obliging him to exert himself, and it saves him the trouble of thinking.

The shopkeepers of the different races may be distinguished as readily by their manner of doing business as by their dress. The sedate Turk is a man of few words, and seldom utters more than is strictly necessary. He sets his goods before you, names their price, and leaves you to do as you please about buying. You need not think of offering him a lower bidding: he will not bate a para, and the only reply he will make will be to take back the article in question and return it to its place.

The Christian talks more; he is anxious to recommend his goods, and is not offended by the offer of a reasonable price, though it be lower than his first demand. He knows there are people who take pleasure in higgling and cheapening, and who will never make a purchase unless they can obtain it at a reduced rate; he therefore makes his arrangements accordingly.

But, if the customer has a genuine taste for the art and mystery of shopping, the Arab is, by all means, the man for his money. Inshallah! you shall not make any purchase of him, unless it be for a very trifling amount indeed, under half-an-hour's bargaining, or more. When you have found the article you want, instead of flippantly demanding its price, throwing down the money, and carrying off your purchase, you prepare yourself very deliberately for a long and interesting set-to. You mount upon the *mustabah* or platform, on which the shopkeeper sits, seat yourself at your ease, fill and light your pipe, and then comes the war of words. An offer of half the price demanded is a very good move to begin with, on your part. It is, of course, rejected, but it brings your antagonist to somewhat closer quarters; and so you both go on, he lowering his demand, and you rising in your offers, with sundry episodes and digressions touching last year's figs, or any other irrelevant topic of conversation, till at last the business is brought to a conclusion, and the bargain is struck for a sum generally half-way between that first demanded and that first offered. When you deal with an Arab, whatever be the subject of the bargain,—shop-goods, horseflesh, or personal services,—it would be the most impolitic thing in the world to accede to the first price demanded, even though you should think it not exorbitant. If the man accepts your money, it will not be long before he repents of what he has done, and then you will find you have brought down an old house about your ears. The novelty of the thing disconcerts him, and, pondering over the matter, he comes to the conclusion that you are a cheat, and himself an injured innocent. Perhaps he will kick off his shoes, and run about like a madman, slapping his face, and crying out, "O my sorrow!" But it more usually happens that, on your imprudently committing yourself by assenting to his first demand, he asks a quarter or a third more; it will then be too late for you to retrieve your error, for when, after much debate, you again close with him, he again steps back in the same proportion as before.

As for the Jew, he is the same in all countries and under every garb. You may know him at once by his importunate eagerness to obtain custom, his volubility of speech, and his grotesque gesticulation, which seems the more strange, by contrast with the gravity and sedateness of the Moslems.

The only shops containing native manufacture somewhat worthy of note are those of the silk-mercers. After having seen the coarse machinery in use, one can hardly conceive how such beautiful textures can be produced by such clumsy means. Formerly these silks were more or less employed in the dress of all classes of the population, but latterly they have been greatly supplanted by the cheaper cotton goods of Manchester. Still the rich gold and silver brocades, manufactured in Beyroot and its vicinity, are in much demand among the wealthy Syrians as the chief material for their gala dresses. Caftans made of this gorgeous material have a most brilliant effect. The silk sashes of Beyroot are also much esteemed, and are exported to different parts of the East. They are often ten ells long and an ell and half wide; and, though made of heavy silk, are yet so fine and elastic that they may be compressed into a bulk scarcely more than can be covered with both hands. Worn round the waist, in a band varying from four or five inches to a foot in width, according to the taste of the wearer, they are a very useful and agreeable article of dress, from the support they afford the loins in these warm, enervating, climates. It is rather an amusing thing to see a gentleman rolling himself into his sash, like a great overgrown silkworm wrapping itself up in its cocoon. He fastens one end to a door, a post, or a bush; then walking out to the full length of the sash, he adjusts its width, arranges its folds, and turns round and round, with great deliberation, till the nice operation is completed to his satisfaction. The part of the dress above the girdle serves, as it has always done from time immemorial, for stowing away all sorts of things; handkerchiefs, when people have any, bread, fruit, &c., nothing comes amiss. As the receptacle goes all round the body, it is equal to three or four of those large pockets our great grandmothers used to wear.

The opulence of the people cannot always be judged of from external appearance. Independently of the tendency of fashion to introduce somewhat plainer and lest costly costume, the changes of government have, no doubt, led to a suppression of those ostentatious displays which often gave a very erroneous idea of the wealth of the individual. Many a man goes meanly clad whose habitation is filled with comforts. The inviolability of the harem is one of the few protections which oriental usages afford against exaction and plunder; and in its recesses many means of enjoyment are often gathered together, such as would be supposed inaccessible to those who possess them. Much property is invested in jewels, especially in diamonds; and one is much surprised, particularly on occasions of great festivals, whether religious or domestic, at the value of the ornaments worn by the females, and the sumptuous entertainments provided by classes apparently poor. The insecurity of property, indeed, attendant on political change, compels those who can save any portion of their incomes or their gains, to invest it in the most portable and costly articles. There are no institutions in which money can be safely deposited; for though the rates of interest are commonly high, there are always risks and uncertainties of which our more orderly social organisation affords no examples. The old opinions, too, respecting the sinfulness of usury, are not without influence,—reproduced out of the Hebrew legislation, as they have been, by both the Christian and

Mohammedan traditions. The principal money-lenders and traffickers in specie, throughout the East, are the Jews; and it may be supposed that the obloquy to which they are subjected adds not a little to the exorbitance of their demands. They form a numerous body throughout all Syria; they are some of the richest bankers and merchants at Aleppo, Damascus, Beyroot, Antioch, Hamah, and all the principal towns of Palestine. It must not be forgotten that the right of the Jews to lend on heavy interest (usury) to strangers, is specifically recognised by the Mosaic law, and it cannot be wondered at that they should avail themselves of it; but it is a main cause of the opprobrium to which they are subjected.*

But the sin of usury is not monopolised by the Jews to the entire exclusion of the Moslems. The latter have much degenerated from the primitive fervour of Islamism, particularly in Syria, and have invented a multitude of subterfuges and gross tricks by which they contrive to combine a fanatical reverence for the dogmas of the Koran, with a most impudent disregard for its practical morality. The following is the device by which the Moslem usurer quiets his conscience and keeps within the strict letter of the law. The borrower makes himself liable, before the cadi, for the sum lent, together with the interest agreed on; the contract being to this effect, that Abu Thaleb acknowledges himself indebted to Hadji Ismael for so much moneys on account of value received, to wit, one or more bales of soap, indigo, &c. The matter is thus put upon a perfectly legal footing, and Hadji Ismael figures in the honourable light of a merchant deriving his gain from the fair and open ways of commerce. The contract being settled, the two parties proceed to the Hadji's house, who hands over the money in question to the other, after deducting the interest agreed on. He then, with the utmost gravity, takes the first small animal he can lay his hands on (he generally has a stock of cats by him for this purpose), lays two small bundles of the goods mentioned in the bond on the animal's back, and delivers it, thus loaded, to his customer, who, with no less gravity, walks away with his purchase. The sale is thus completed, and the interest comes to be regarded only as a bucksheesh. The loan, it is to be observed, is always for a very short term, and the creditor takes care to secure himself against all contingencies by exacting a pledge from his debtor, often of double the value of the money lent.†

Beyroot must have presented a peculiarly animated appearance in the winter of 1840-1 when the bay was crowded with vessels of all kinds, from the English line-of-battle ship down to the crazy Arab skiff, and the town and its environs swarmed with soldiers of fifty different races. A German traveller‡ has given a lively account of the impressions made on him by the motley bustling scene: the following is a free translation of his remarks with some additions from other sources.

I found the streets here, he says, far more interesting than those even of Stamboul. For, whereas in the latter city everybody is engaged in peace-

* Dr. Bowring, Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria, 1840. † Perrier.

‡ Hackländer, Daguerreotypen aufgenommen während einer Reise in den Orient in den Jahren 1840 and 1841.

ful occupations, which he seeks to despatch with reasonable speed, here the parti-coloured mob, all bristling with weapons, whom the chance of war has so oddly assembled, go sauntering about with leisurely and grave composure. The vigorous mountaineers of Lebanon, in their wide, showy-coloured, trousers, scarlet embroidered jackets, and white turbans, are usually seen congregated in large groups. They are all in high spirits, for they have, every man of them, once more a gun on his back, that darling weapon they had been so long prohibited from carrying, on pain of death, since it had been wrested from them by Ibrahim's strong hand. They fill the whole street of the armourers, and keep the smiths as busy as they can be, repairing and furbishing up the weapons the Turkish government has been so obliging as to bestow upon them. I rather fear these same weapons, which at present, indeed, are pointed against Ibrahim Pasha, may possibly, ere long, begin to be formidable to the Turks themselves; for every man who has got one, has very clearly intimated that he will not let it be taken from him again without showing fight for it. Here and there a Bedouin, the swarthy son of the desert, stalks, silent and solemn, through the crowd. His long white or striped burnoos hangs from his shoulder to the ground, and on his head he wears the head-dress of his people, a woollen kerchief striped with red and yellow, secured by a band of small coloured strings. Though the currents of his life seldom carry him from his native sands among the raree-shows of the city, he scrutinises the shops like a connoisseur, peering at them with his piercing black eyes, and smoking his short pipe, but moving not a muscle in his visage of bronze. After him comes a *miralaya*, or colonel in the Sultan's service, on his stately, high-conditioned steed: on his breast is the diamond star, the sign of his rank, and he is followed by a numerous retinue carrying his weapons and his pipe.

Mountaineer of Lebanon.

Yonder go two Arnaouts, in their handsome picturesque garb, the scarlet jacket, white fustanella or kilt, and embossed linen greaves. They move about like cocks of the walk, and keep "the crown of the causeway," with one hand stuck in their girdles, in which, besides two pistols, a yataghan, a dagger and a knife, they find room to stow also a gun and a pipe.

I have hardly seen among these men a single one with a good or pleasing cast of countenance, or in whose features there did not seem to be a lurking expression of villany and craft. They serve as irregular troops of infantry and cavalry; and may be regarded almost as successors of the extinct janissaries and mamelukes. They desert one flag without scruple and take service under another, as they see chance of obtaining more booty and better pay; they fight only when they have a mind, and think nothing of murdering their officers. Ibrahim Pasha, a few weeks before our arrival, shot some twenty of these gallows-birds, who had been guilty of some act

of insubordination Nevertheless, it is universally asserted that, as far as bravery is concerned, the five or six thousand men of this race in his army are the very best of his troops.

Arnaout Soldier.

These vagabond mercenaries are held in extraordinary dread by the other inhabitants of Beyroot, and whenever an Arnaout seats himself in a coffee-house, all the other guests huddle themselves together like frighted chickens when the kite is seen. Nor are these fears groundless, as too many a horrid tale can prove.

On the 10th of July, 1840, a corps of four or five hundred Arnaouts left Beyroot to occupy Seyde;* they arrived there glutted with blood and plunder. The inhabitants of Malaka, near the river Damour, who had been engaged in the insurrectionary movements that took place at that period, had submitted some days before, and had returned to their village. The men were absent from their houses attending to their agricultural pursuits, when the Albanians came up; and the brutal soldiers, in spite of all their officers and the chokadar Ibrahim Bey could do, rushed upon Malaka, and two other neighbouring villages, and there rioted in all the excesses of their brutal natures; and this they could do without restraint, since they found hardly any one in the villages but women and children. The church of Malaka was sacked and plundered, and two priests were butchered in their houses. Not content with these atrocities, the ferocious band robbed every one they met on the road, all the way to the gates of Seyde; seizing even the camels, oxen, and asses of the peasants, to sell them in the bazaar. They had taken some mules with them from Beyroot to carry their baggage; when they got to the bridge, three quarters of a mile from Seyde, they shot the three moukres dead, and seized their mules. All these barbarities were left unpunished; for the Egyptian government was then in too critical a position to risk the chances of a revolt on the part of these unbridled ruffians.

Desolation, havoc, rape, and murder, invariably mark the track of Arnaout soldiery, who are, perhaps, no less formidable to their allies than to their enemies. Some hundreds of them let loose upon a revolted village, quit it at the end of a few hours, drunk with blood and riot. If they are not allowed to make slaves, they often leave behind them not one living creature, —nothing but blood, corpses, and reeking ruins. It is to the tender mercies of such troops that the Christian insurgents in different parts of the Ottoman empire are surrendered.

To return from this digression.—The diversity of costume in the streets is further augmented by the varied garb of the different sects of Christians, Greeks, United and Schismatic, Armenians and Maronites. The women of the latter, as well as those of the Druses, wear a singular ornament on

* Perrier (Aide de Camp de Soliman Pacha), La Syrie sous le gouvernement de Méhémet Ali.

the head,—a conical tube of silver, or other metal, from one to two feet long: it is set on at an angle of 45°, sometimes pointing forwards, sometimes to one side, and over it is thrown a piece of muslin, that reaches nearly to the heels, and serves as a veil. Then there are the various *nuances* of the Moslem faith, which are likewise evidenced by the dress.

Female of Lebanon.

Yonder walks the grave Turk of the old school (and there are still many such in Syria), dressed in his long caftan, and his white or green bellying turban: the latter colour distinguishes the descendant of the Prophet, who is entitled to be styled emir, or the hadjee, who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Though *emir* is properly equivalent to lord, or even to prince, the title is now sunk in value, and the majority of those who may claim it in its primitive sense, are to be found among the lowest classes, such as porters, watersellers, &c.

The genuine Moslem pursues his way sedately, with one hand fondling his curling beard, and the other resting on the dagger, or the writing-case in his girdle. The unfortunate scattered race of Judah has likewise its representatives here. Always on the alert to increase his store, the Jew shuffles through the crowd, dressed in a dirty caftan, and dark-coloured turban, squinting right and left after any chance of petty gain that may present itself: above all, he throws a sheep's eye at the Europeans wandering about here, and makes up to them at once with offers of all possible services. Delegates from almost all the nations of Europe are here in great numbers, and all true to their respective national characters. The Frenchman saunters about in canary-coloured *gants de Paris glacés;* and whilst all the Austrian sailors take off their hats to every well-dressed Frank that looks civilly at them, the wooden-faced Englishman* sails right ahead, staring up at the houses and the sky, and runs every one down that does not get out of his way.

Female promenaders are not so numerous here as in Constantinople. All the Moslem women have their faces concealed by a strip of black silk or cotton, fitting like a visor, hanging down to the middle: besides this, whenever they spy a stranger approaching, they throw also over their heads a piece of white muslin that hangs over their backs, and this manœuvre is practised with peculiar alacrity by the oldest and ugliest—a proceeding on their parts to which there can be no possible objection: "a man must travel eastwards, duly to appreciate the hag-like hideousness of female antiquity.†" The young and pretty not unfrequently draw their veils aside, and disclose a pair of black lustrous eyes, for which they are immediately chided by their more rigorous seniors. The Maronite women, too, wear a white veil over their horns, and drop it now and then to conceal their pretty round faces

* Literally so in the original: *der Engländermit dem hölzernen Gesicht.* And this from a German! Too bad, John Bull, is it not?

† Lord F. Egerton.

from the gaze of strangers. Nevertheless, they have made very tolerable progress in civilisation, and they often enough favour one with a good-humoured smile. The women of the Arab Catholics, of whom there are many here, go unveiled, and I have seen among them some splendid figures, and faces of rare beauty. Our landlady for instance—if ever there was a woman of commanding and majestic mien, such was she; and she was so beautiful that I was within a hair's-breadth of falling in love with her.

The environs of the town wore a no less military aspect than its interior, and at that period resembled a vast camp. The hundred men of the English artillery, who represented the forces of the four great powers, had made the Marina their head quarters: there stood their loaded six-pounders; whilst the men themselves were lodged partly in an adjoining building, partly in white tents. I hardly ever passed the place, be the hour of the day what it might, without finding the sons of Albion busy about their flesh-pots in the camp kitchen, they had set up against a wall. Westward of the town, and on a height that commands it, stood the Turkish park of artillery. The men were encamped in bright green tents, and the carriages of their guns were painted the same colour: they had about thirty cannons, of the dimensions of our six-pounders, but most of them were of far greater calibre, so that I took them at first for mortars. The metal is so thin, that it must become dangerously heated after a very few shots; besides, many of them are of bronze, instead of genuine gun metal. I do not imagine, however, that the Turks will very readily be in a condition to manœuvre with these cannons: they had neither tumbrils nor ammunition; nor did I find a single waggon in the whole park.

The most interesting point to me was a little piece of open ground below the Turkish artillery, and adjoining the city wall. Here the Bedouins from the Haouran, some fifty or sixty men, had pitched their gray tents, in which they had neither straw nor carpets; they slept on the bare earth, wrapped only in their burnooses. We passed many an hour among them: at first they regarded us with distrust, and did not seem altogether to like our modest advances; but, by-and-by, they became more friendly, and a few trifling presents established us completely in their good graces. Most of them were tall, gaunt men, with expressive, but very dirty faces, the grimness of which was somewhat heightened by their straight black beards. Their weapons were a sabre, a very long and slender gun slung over the shoulder, and a lance at least fifteen feet in length, terminating in a three-edged iron point a foot long, the socket of which was adorned with thick bunches of black ostrich feathers. Before the tents stood the inseparable companions of these desert-born warriors, their gallant trusty horses; almost all finely shaped, but as lank as their riders. They were picketted by a chain fastened round one foot, and were always ready saddled and bridled.

Bedouin Head-dress.

The Bedouin and his horse should be seen together; for then they make a

noble and truly poetical figure; when viewed apart, the charm vanishes. When the rider's foot is on the ground, he creeps sluggishly and listlessly about, or squats under his tent, smoking his short pipe in sullen silence; and the horse stands tamely with his tail drooping and his head bent down, looking hungrily after the few blades of grass that sprout up between the stones. But when the Bedouin springs into the saddle, an electric energy seems breathed into man and horse; the rider's eye flashes, his muscular form rises up in its pride and strength, he utters a peculiar yell, the horse bounds forth and makes the air whistle with his speed, whilst his streaming tail often lashes his rider's back. In a few moments nothing is to be seen in the distance, but a cloud of dust, with the black feathers of the lance dancing above it.

North of the Bedouin encampment was the great promenade of the town, so to speak, a tolerably spacious arena, in which there was every moment something novel to attract the stranger's eye. A perpetual fair was held here: there were small wooden booths for the sale of sherbet, bread and fruit, and a coffee-house had been erected, where the guests sat on little wicker-work stools made of palm twigs, and the landlord prepared the coffee on a heap of stones that served for a fire-place. The pipe and the nargileh were of course not wanting. Here I usually took up my station to watch the Babel-like concourse around me, and the ever-shifting pictures it presented. I still think with pleasure of the day, when, leaning my back against a tree, I first inhaled the mild fumes of the Arab water-pipe, a luxury of which our German smokers have no conception. The instrument is very simple; water is poured into a cocoa-nut having two holes; into one of these is inserted a wooden tube supporting a brass bowl in which the tobacco is placed, with a lighted coal upon it; a slender pipe-stick is fitted to the other hole in the nut. Furnished with this implement, I seated myself, and had only to make a gesture with my hand to have a fresh cup of coffee supplied me, or my pipe replenished with tobacco; I was all at once a mighty pasha, nor did I even lack a retinue; for whenever I passed my Bedouin friends on my way to this place, some of them were sure to follow me, and squat down beside me when I took my seat at the coffee-house.

The bustling scenes exhibited in this place were particularly entertaining in the afternoon, when the people of the neighbourhood who had been to the town on business, flocked thither, and arranged themselves in groups to take their evening meal. Horse-jockeying was now carried on briskly, and the animals were mounted for trial, which is performed in a very simple manner by the Easterns. The rider fixes himself firmly in the saddle, the horse being held for him, if necessary, till his seat is secure; he then slacks the reins, claps the stirrups to the animal's flanks, and away it goes at full gallop till the rider pulls it up with a violent check, wheels round, and gallops it back over the same ground. This is repeated again and again till the animal has been so tortured by the severe bit, that it only gallops when the rider urges it with the reins, and stops the moment it feels the least motion of the bridle. Trotting is a pace unknown to the Arabs; nor have they any idea of what we call "a fine bridle hand." The Eastern bit is exceedingly severe, being provided with a large ring falling from the port and

embracing the lower jaw like a curb. London saddlers, call this bit a *mameluke*, but it is in universal use throughout the East. In order to obtain complete mastery over their horses, the Arabs adopt two means reprobated by

the European: first, they mount their horses when two years old, before the animals have attained their full strength; and, seeondly, their stirrups are so sharp, that the tortured horse is forced to be docile and obedient.

One day we made an excursion to the Nahr el Kelb, and our cavalcade was preceded by the janissary of the Austrian Consul, a handsome young Turk, in gold-laced red dolman and nether garments to match, and a green turban on his head, for he was of the lineage of the Prophet. He carried in his hand a long cane, with a great silver knob at top, the badge of his office, and was evidently a very important personage in his own conceit. To us he was all politeness and submission; but woe to those who failed to pay due heed when he shouted to them to clear the way; he dashed at them full gallop to ride them down, or belaboured their heads and shoulders with his silver-headed stick. It would have done a parish beadle's heart good to have seen how he upheld the dignity of his office.

When we were about an hour from the town, near the scene of St. George's fight with the Dragon, we saw a large concourse of people assembled, soldiers drawn up in rank and file, and officers galloping about on their handsome chargers. These tokens of preparation, we learned, were for the reception of Zachariah Pasha, the new governor of Syria, who was that day expected from Aleppo. He had been appointed to supersede the brutal old Izzet Pasha, who was transferred to the pachalic of Adrianople, and afterwards rose to be Grand Vizier—for why?—he had sold Varna to the Russians.

Our janissary advised us to slacken our pace, as we might then probably meet the new pasha's cavalcade. It turned out as he said; and in half an hour we saw a body of horsemen approaching us. At the head of the line

rode two men, wheeling about, and playing the strangest antics with their horses. Their dress was like our janissary's, only more richly covered with gold and embroidery; and in their hands they carried two very long Bedouin lances, adorned with three tufts of black ostrich feathers. They were two of the pacha's cavasses, whose duty it is, when the great man is on a journey, to ride before him, relieving each other in pairs, and to amuse him by their equestrian performances. These men went over the ground at least a hundred times: sometimes they rode away from each other right and left, then turned and charged each other with levelled lances and loud yells, passed each other, and again repeated the same manœuvre. They had *three* tufts of feathers on their lances, because their master was a pasha of three tails, and according to the new system a *Ferik Pasha.* However difficult it may be to distinguish the military rank of the subordinate Turkish officers by their dress and appointments, nothing is easier than to discriminate between the Ferik and the ordinary Pasha, the former alone rejoicing in the prerogative of wearing a full-bearded chin. All the other pashas must content themselves with moustaches.

The Europeanising process which has stripped all the civil and military officers of Turkey of so much of their former splendour, has, in like manner, diminished the pomp and circumstance of their public pageants. With what prodigious magnificence did the pashas of other days move from one province to another, themselves most gorgeously arrayed, and escorted by hundreds of useless but sumptuously attired retainers. It is quite otherwise now. Zachariah Pâsha's retinue, though he was assuming the important post of military governor of Syria, consisted of no more than from a hundred to a hundred and fifty mounted men. He himself rode a very ordinary hack; but he was followed by a few led horses, much better-looking, and rather richly caparisoned. Zachariah was a man of middle stature, with a good-humoured and pleasing cast of features, and a very long beard. He wore a dark blue surtout, on the breast of which glittered the Neshah Eftendar, composed of fine brilliants; his head-dress was a red fez, with a long blue silk tassel. His retinue consisted chiefly of his household servants, simply dressed like himself in long blue frocks; and their various functions were indicated only by the implements they carried. The Cawasses wore the usual crooked sabre, and an embossed case containing two pistols was stuck in their girdles. Of the pipe-bearers (of whom there are always many in the suite of a rich Turkish grandee) some carried long chibooks, others the nargileh, some had tobacco pouches hanging at their saddle bows, and some carried braziers with lighted charcoal, which they kept alive by swinging and blowing. The rest of the escort was made up of inferior servants, grooms and so forth, and of Bedouins employed as Tatars to carry dispatches from place to place. The latter wore the old Oriental garb, voluminous trousers, short jackets, and turbans. One of them had a small drum, with which he kept up an unceasing monotonous din, whilst the others occasionally sang to this rude accompaniment.

A very beautiful spectacle, witnessed here at the Feast of the Cross, in the month of September, is thus described by an American missionary.—As it began to grow dark, we observed bonfires lighted in the neighbourhood, and

other tokens of festivity. We went to the terrace on the top of the house, which commanded a view of Mount Lebanon to an extent of nearly thirty miles. Along the whole range we could see the bonfires glaring; they looked, on the dark side of the mountain, like stars on the face of the deep blue vault of heaven. They were of all sizes; sometimes they would glimmer and expire, while new ones would burst forth and soon attain the first magnitude, and then die away, or blaze up in fitful flashes as fresh fuel was thrown on them. These tokens of rejoicing are exhibited in commemoration of the finding of the true cross by the empress Helena. It is said, that on her way to Jerusalem she gave orders that in case she should be successful in finding the cross, the event should be made known by bonfires, and thus the intelligence be conveyed to Constantinople.

Among the monkish curiosities of the town there was formerly, and for all we know to the contrary, there may still be in an old church belonging to the Greek community, a picture that particularly arrested Maundrell's attention. He describes it as "a very odd figure of a saint, with a large beard reaching down to his feet. The curate gave us to understand that this was St. Nicephorus; and perceiving that his beard was the chief object of our admiration, he gratified us with the following relation concerning him, viz., That he was a person of the most eminent virtues in his time; but his great misfortune was that the endowments of his mind were not set off with the outward ornament of a beard; upon occasion of which defect he fell into a deep melancholy. The devil taking advantage of this priest, promised to give him that boon which nature had denied, in case he would comply with his suggestions. The beardless saint, though he was very desirous of the reward proposed, yet he would not purchase it at that rate neither, but rejected the bribe with indignation, declaring resolutely, that he had rather for ever despair of his wish than obtain it on such terms. And at the same time taking in hand the downy tuft upon his chin, to witness the stability of his resolution, (for he had, it seems, beard enough to swear by), behold! as a reward for his constancy, he found the hair immediately stretch with the pluck that he gave it. Whereupon finding it in so good a humour, he followed the happy omen; and, as young heirs that have been niggardly bred generally turn prodigals when they come to their estates, so he never desisted from pulling his beard till he had wiredrawn it down to his feet."

Talking of saints, it would be unpardonable to omit mentioning the thrice renowned St. George, who duelled and killed the dragon in this neighbourhood. About an hour's ride to the east of the town is shown the scene of the conflict, and a rock, marked with the monster's blood, or, as others report, with the soap-suds wherein the holy champion washed his hands after the exploit. A small chapel, erected to commemorate the deed, was afterwards converted into a mosque, which is now in decay. Curiously enough, the pig-hating Turks entertain much reverence for the Cappadocian worthy, who began his career as a knavish speculator in bacon.

It is a very remarkable trait in the character of the people of Egypt, and other countries of the East, that Moslems, Christians, and Jews, adopt each other's superstitions, while they abhor the more rational doctrines of each other's faiths. In sickness, the Moslem sometimes employs Christian and

Jewish priests to pray for him: the Christians and Jews in the same predicament often call on Moslem saints for the like purpose.* In the spring of 1837, a party of Dervishes, who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, passed through Beyroot on their return, and great crowds went out to meet the holy men, and see them thrust iron spikes and sword-blades through their flesh, with other edifying wonders. The author, from whom we derive this statement, and who was residing in the town at the time, was assured by several eye-witnesses, that boys threw themselves on the ground, with their faces to the earth, making a row of forty or fifty yards as close together as they could lie, and that one of the *welees* (saints) paced his horse over their backs. The boys jumped up very briskly, though some of them showed what they were unwilling to acknowledge, that they were slightly hurt: and, strange as it may appear, there were Christians not less forward actors than the Moslems in this scene of debasing superstition.

One of these Dervishes died soon after in Beyroot, and the others immediately took the most vigorous measures to prevent his body flying off to Heaven, which they pretended it would certainly do, but for their fastening ropes to it, and holding on to them with might and main, as they carried the saintly remains to the burial-ground. On their way, the bearers stopped several times, and would pull this way and that, as if some invisible power would not let them go forward: his saintship, it appeared, did not like the road they were going, or had an objection to be buried at all. At length, however, with much exertion, they got him to the grave, put him in, and made a great lamentation over him.

The business of burying a welee is almost always more or less obstructed by capricious hindrances of this kind: the defunct has been so petted and spoiled in his lifetime, that he must needs continue even in death to have his own way; but the omnipotence of his will is at an end; the bearers, who would have humoured him in any freak while alive, even to the unutterable violation of all decency, now turn the tables upon him, and, will he nill he, they take him just where they please. Lane relates a curious anecdote in point. A dead Caireen welee would not let his bearers carry him through the gate called Bab-en-Nusr. "It seems," said one of the men, "that the sheykh is determined not to be buried in the cemetery of Baben-Nusr; and what shall we do?" They were much perplexed; but, being as obstinate as the saint himself, they did not immediately yield to his caprice. Retreating a few steps, and then rushing forwards, they thought by such an impetus to force the corpse through the gateway; but the thing was a failure; they repeated the experiment several times, but had to give it up at last as a bad job. Setting down the bier, they held a consultation, when one of them beckoning his companions out of earshot of the dead saint, said to them, "Let us take up the bier again, and turn it round quickly several times, till the sheykh becomes giddy; he will then not know in what direction we are going, and we may take him easily through the gate." This they did; the saint was puzzled, as they expected, and quietly buried in the place he had so striven to avoid.

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* Lane's Modern Egyptians.

CHAPTER II.

Syrian Dwelling-houses.

A Syrian dwelling-house is a very different thing from its congeners of Europe. Its simplest form is that of a plain block, like a Brobdignaggian chest, with one room in the basement serving for parlour, kitchen, and hall, and one above this in which the family sleep. But the real domicile, in this climate, is more properly the flat terraced roof; there the women and the children pass the day, and frequently the night also. The materials vary according to the resources of the locality: mud or bricks dried in the sun, having chopped straw worked up with their substance to render it more tenacious, are those most frequently employed for the walls; and this, too, even in Damascus, where stone is abundantly within reach.

Houses in Beyroot.

The better class of dwellings is of a quadrangular form, built round a court-yard, to which admission is gained from the street by an arched doorway and a low, dark passage: the latter has commonly two turnings, so that no prying eye may look through the opened door into the interior. In the centre a jet of water falls back bubbling and murmuring into a marble basin; or if that beautiful ornament be wanting, there is a well in one of the corners. In summer an awning is drawn across the court, which latter the Arabs call by a name exactly corresponding to the Greek term (the *midst*, of the authorised version,) used by the evangelists in their account of the cure of the man who was sick of the palsy.

The rooms in the upper story constitute the harem, or private apartments of the family; those on the ground floor are often without any external opening to admit light; and are used only as store-rooms and domestic offices. In the houses of the wealthy there are rooms for the reception of male guests on the basement. Some of them are entirely open on the side next the court, and are haunted by birds of beautiful plumage. At Damiani's (Consul at Yaffa), Lamartine was delighted to see hundreds of little red-throated swallows perched all round the room among the china, the filigree silver cups, and the pipe-sticks that decorated the cornices. They fluttered, he says, all day long over the heads of the guests, and even perched at supper on the branches of the copper lamp suspended from the ceiling. He and his

party passed the night on the cushions of the Consul's divan, and in the morning they were wakened from their slumbers by the twittering of their pretty little fellow lodgers.

The lower rooms of the rich are, like the court-yard, paved with marble, and have each a fountain, and the walls are adorned, breast-high, with marble or beautiful wood-work of yellow cedar: they are furnished with cupboards for the stowage of bedding, and open niches or ornamental slabs for vases with water, sherbet, or flowers. The floor is divided into two parts: a lower and smaller one next the court, where the servants stand with folded arms watching their master's looks; and a raised platform, like the dais in an old baronial hall, separated from the lower part by a handsome balustrade. The higher portion is called the *leewan*, and the lower portion the *doorckaah*. The former is reserved for the master of the house and his friends. When the attendance of the servants is required, if they be not in the doorckaah they are summoned by clapping the hands, for house-bells are unknown in the East. The leewan may be rendered delightfully cool by laying the doorckaah under water. No one steps on the leewan without taking off his outer shoes, under which it is usual to wear a pair of thin leather slippers without soles. The ladies themselves recline on the divans with bare feet, or shod with embroidered velvet slippers. Whenever they quit these luxurious couches, they put on a kind of wooden shoe or patten, six or eight inches high, made of ebony, or other black wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl: from long habit they are able to run about in these awkward things, and even to trip nimbly up and down stairs without falling. One of the chief reasons for the custom of their uncovering the feet, is to avoid defiling a mat or carpet on which prayer is usually made. This, as many authors have observed, illustrates the passages of Scripture, (Exod. iii. 5; Josh. v. 15.)

Lady reclining on a Divan.

The ceiling is highly painted and adorned; the part over the leewan is sometimes vaulted, and decorated with pendent ornaments, particularly in the houses of the Turks: more commonly the beams are left uncovered, and are carved, partially painted, and sometimes gilded. But the ceiling over the doorckaah, which is higher than that over the leewan, is usually more richly decorated, with small strips of gilding, and various gay colours, arranged in curiously complicated patterns, yet perfectly regular, and having a highly ornamental effect. The ceiling of a projecting window is often adorned in the same manner. Good taste is evinced by thus decorating only such parts as are not always before the eyes; for to look long at so many lines intersecting each other in all directions would be painful.

The leewan is covered with a mat in summer, and a carpet over this in winter; and a sofa, raised from six inches to a foot, runs round its three sides, forming what is called the *deewan*, or divan. The sofa is a little higher before than behind, and is about four feet wide ; cushions four feet long and two feet high lean against the wall. The angles are the seats of honour, as among the ancient Greeks: the right corner is the chief place; then the sofa along the top, and general proximity to the right corner. But even here the Eastern's respect for man above circumstances is shown. The relative value of the positions all round the room is changed, should the person of the highest rank accidentally occupy another place. In this respect they act with systematic politeness, on the principle rudely asserted by a haughty Highland chieftain, who, when visiting a Lowland gentleman, was invited by his host to sit by him at the head of the room. Turning to one of his followers, the chieftain inquired in Gaelic, "What says the Saxon?" The courteous request was interpreted; whereupon he made answer, "Tell the carle that wherever —— sits, that is the head of the room."

Except when the room is open towards the court, it is lighted by latticed windows at the upper end, usually extending across its whole breadth, and forming a deep recess or balcony carried out on corbels, the floor of which is also furnished with a divan. The consequence of this arrangement of the seats and windows is, that you sit with your back to the light and your face to the door; the light, too, falls in a single mass, and from above, affording pictorial effects dear to the artist. Instead of this balcony there is sometimes a small raised alcove, which, with the steps leading up to it, is shut off from the leewan by a screen of curiously wrought lattice-work. It is just large enough to hold a mattress and silk pillows, and to serve the rich Turk or Arab as a dormitory. Men of inferior station content themselves with mattresses laid on the floor, upon which they sleep without undressing. The domestics lay themselves down by the street-door, in the passage, or in the court; no one ever gives himself any concern about finding sleeping room or accommodation for them. The common people in Syria have no other bed than an Egyptian straw mat on the ground or on the housetop; the beauty of the climate makes up for the want of all other appliances; and even the stranger from the wintry north can desire no more delightful curtain over his head than the starry firmament, beneath which the light breeze fans and lulls him to repose. There is very little dew in this country, except on the mountains, and one may generally sleep in the open air without inconvenience, with only a silk handkerchief over the head.

Thus, then, there being in Eastern houses no *bed-rooms*, in the European sense of the word, it naturally follows that the apartments in the harem are counterparts of those on the ground floor. But there is commonly in the harem a room called a *ckaah*, which is particularly lofty, and has two leewans, one on each hand of a person entering: one of these is generally larger than the other, and is the more honourable part. That portion of the roof which is over the doorckaah in this saloon is a little elevated above the rest, and has in the centre a small lantern, called *memruck*, the sides of which are of lattice-work like the windows in general. All the rooms in the houses of the wealthy are lofty, generally fourteen feet or more in height; but the ckaah is the largest and most lofty room, and in a large house it is a noble saloon.

If we have succeeded in conveying to the reader an adequate general notion of the form and attributes of an Arab or Turkish reception-room, we have helped him to make what Mr. Urquhart calls, in his excellent remarks on the domestic architecture of the Turks, "the first step to acquaintance with the East." "The habits of social intercourse in the East could not subsist a day in such lodgings as our western habitations afford." Certain

A Syrian Turk's Divan.

social characters are connected with, and have given rise to, the structure of the apartment we have described; and therefore, the architectural details in question ought to be thoroughly understood, in order to become acquainted with the ideas and manners of the people among whom they are in vogue.

"We build our houses," says Mr. Urquhart, "with reference not to the inside, but to the out. It is the aspect of the exterior, not the comfort of the apartment, that engages our attention. We follow the rules of architecture strictly in the details and decorations of the stones of which it is built, and positively have not, at this day, any fixed rules or principles for the construction of the portion we are ourselves to occupy; nor have we the idea of the existence of such rules in any other country, or in any former age.

"The consequence is, that our rooms are of all shapes, and have no settled character. *They have no parts.* There is a commingling of doors and windows, neither of these being rendered available for determining the top, bottom, and sides. The position of the seats is equally undefined; so that,

in regard to parts, character, proportion, access, light, and accommodation, our apartments are regulated by no intelligible principles, and cannot be rendered subservient to the social purposes of a people between whom laws have not established broad lines of demarcation, and who therefore seek, in the adjustment of the grades of society, means to preserve the natural inequality of men. Forms of etiquette, in their infinite variety, become the expression of public opinion in determining rank and station. Thus, a room in the East is not a box shut in from the weather, and converted into an apartment solely by the value of the materials employed to construct or adorn it: it is a whole composed of determined parts; it is a structure regulated by fixed and invariable principles; it is a court like a college-hall, where each individual's grade may be known by the place he occupies; and while thus constituted, it serves equally as our rooms for all the purposes of domestic life. These distinctive characters become a portion of domestic life, and are associated with the public character of the state."

In the East "the room is the principle of all architecture; it is the unit of which the house is the aggregate." No one cares for the external form of a building. Its proportion, its elegance, or its effect, are never considered. The architect, as well as the proprietor, thinks only of the apartments, and there no deviation from fixed principles is tolerated. Money and space are equally sacrificed to give to each chamber its fixed form, light, and facility of access, without having to traverse a passage or another apartment to reach it.

This mode of construction combining economy (in furniture, if not in architecture) with elegance, and simplicity with dignity, argues a people sober in mind and dignified in manner; orderly, cleanly and decorous in their domestic habits; while the ample means of accommodation for guests indicate a hospitable character and a convivial spirit. The undeviating form of the apartment leaves no ambiguity as to the relative position which each individual is entitled to occupy; whilst the necessity of that arrangement is itself the effect of a more free intercourse between various ranks, than would be practicable with our manners and with our apartments. Throughout the Turkish empire men of the very lowest rank often enter the reception room of the grandee. Elders, old men, tradesmen, &c. are always asked to sit down, which the form of the apartment admits of without infringement of respect or etiquette. Even those who are not invited to sit down come and stand below the balustrade; and thus every class becomes acquainted with every other, and the idea of animosity between different grades or classes of society, is what never entered any man's head. A state of things analogous to this existed once in England; it has been swept away with the course of time, which has brought us much we should be thankful for: but has the change been solely for the better? Are the bonds of society safer now from the gnawing tooth of jealousy than they were in the days of our forefathers? Is our mental independence loftier, our proneness to tuft-hunting less intense than theirs? Were they the laughing-stock of every civilised nation, for the nervous alarm with which they shrank, as if their skins were raw all over with a perpetual blister, from casual contact and interchange of passing courtesies with strangers of their own land?

Position in a room is, in the East, as we have seen, a question of gravity

and importance. If a stranger enters, unknown and unannounced, the measure of his first step, the point where he stops to make his salutation, and the attitude he assumes preparatory to doing so, wholly inappreciable as they would be to an European, convey instantaneously to the master of the house the quality of the guest, and the reception he expects, which no man exacts without being entitled to it.

The terrace-roofs of the best houses are thus constructed: across the beams forming the ceiling of the uppermost story deal planks are laid, fitting nicely together, and over these rafters are placed transversely, the interstices between which are filled up with chopped hay or straw, mixed with lime and small pebbles. Upon this surface is laid a layer of pounded charcoal, then one of lime and sand, mixed up with ashes and charcoal; and the whole is rolled and beaten with a mallet till it assumes a bright polish, and is impermeable to the rain. The poorer classes use a coarse plaster consisting chiefly of clay, or even content themselves with clay only. Houses thus covered are well enough in the long dry weather; but woe to their inmates when the rains set in, for then their choice is only between showers of water and showers of mud.

The fashion of flat roofs is, in some measure, attended with results at variance with the jealous privacy affected in the domestic economy of the East. A gentleman who rises early may see more of his neighbour's *ménage* than is consistent with strict propriety; if his position be a good one he may sometimes play peeping Tom to a whole city in the grey morning; and houses will occasionally be so placed, that it is scarcely possible to avoid stealing a look into the court-yards of the adjoining families, where all appear unmasked: the people move about in them like figures in the bottom of a pit, and the fairest ladies are occupied in the most humble offices. Many a tender tale of passion dates from a casual encounter of the eyes, occasioned by this happy arrangement of the house-tops, whereas our sloping roofs are privy only to the soft whisperings of enamoured cats. It was a flat roof, for instance, that enabled Hadji Baba to declare to his charmer, that "her eyes had made roast meat of his heart;" and from a similar post of vantage on the top of a convent in Damascus, a gallant Englishman——But we will let him tell his own story:

"In a house near the convent I caught an occasional glimpse of so beautiful a face, that I was tempted to seek its light oftener, perhaps, than would be wise to acknowledge. I thought I had never seen so perfectly lovely a countenance. A grated window, which looked into the centre area of the house, concealed the figure from me, and prevented my seeing in what occupation so graceful a creature was engaged. As she cast her eyes upwards through the bars—and they were the most expressive eyes in the world—I was so fascinated, that she must have been duller than Eastern ladies generally are, had she not perceived it. It happened, therefore, whenever I walked upon the terrace, that accident brought the beautiful Helena to the grated window; and I grew impatient to liberate her from what seemed to me a most barbarous imprisonment.

"The happy moment at length arrived. I had bought a large bunch of violets in my ramble through the bazaar, and armed with so infallible an

interpreter, I appeared at my post: she was busily engaged, but suspended her work awhile on perceiving me, and leaning her cheek upon her hand, like Juliet, made behind her prison bars the prettiest picture imaginable. A bright instrument was in the left hand, and I thought she might have been passing her seclusion in some elegant embroidery. Now, however, I resolved to tempt her from the window, and kissing my violets, threw them over the wall. She rose, and clattering on a pair of high wooden shoes, came forth, with a knife in one hand, and a fish she had been scraping in the other. My romance was at an end in a moment, and I never could recover gravity enough to return to the terrace. She was exceedingly beautiful, the daughter of a rich merchant, and had, as usual, been betrothed in her youth, but to a man who had proved false; he had gone to Alexandria, it was said, and had never since been heard of. Her unfortunate story and her beauty were equally subjects of conversation among her acquaintances. I found the misfortune, however, was not in the desertion so much, as in the necessity of remaining single until the death of the affianced husband should enable her to take another*."

To bring home the conclusion of this chapter to Beyroot, the point whence we started—the houses there are well built; they are admirably adapted to the climate, and can be made sufficiently warm during the winter. There are circumstances, however, which it must be owned do somewhat detract from the pleasure of living in them: fleas swarm in every apartment during the cooler months, and mosquitoes give you no rest during the heat; ugly little lizards run about your bedroom; and all the old houses are infested with black snakes. On entering your room at night, you may chance to see an extraordinary shadow moving across the floor. You stoop down to ascertain whether it is a mouse or a lizard, and find an immense strong-legged, hairy spider, as big as a pigeon's egg. In your horror at his appearance, you allow the monster to escape into his hole, and are left in the delightful uncertainty whether he won't return to pay you a visit in bed. But one gets accustomed to all these things, and they soon cease to occasion any very great discomfort: you find that the lizards are very harmless; you declare a war of extermination against the spiders; and you learn to submit to the fleas and mosquitoes, because you must†. Fleas can, by no care whatever, be excluded from the neatest houses; the long eastern habit, affording them shelter, is a favourable conveyance, and the streets and dusty bazaars so swarm with them, that it is impossible to walk abroad without collecting a colony. The frequent use of the bath is in some measure a protection against another kind of vermin; but there is no remedy against your flea, that pertinacious persecutor, which an Arab author describes as "a black, nimble, extenuated, hunchbacked animal, which being sensible when any one looks on it, jumps incessantly, now on one side, now on the other, till it gets out of sight."

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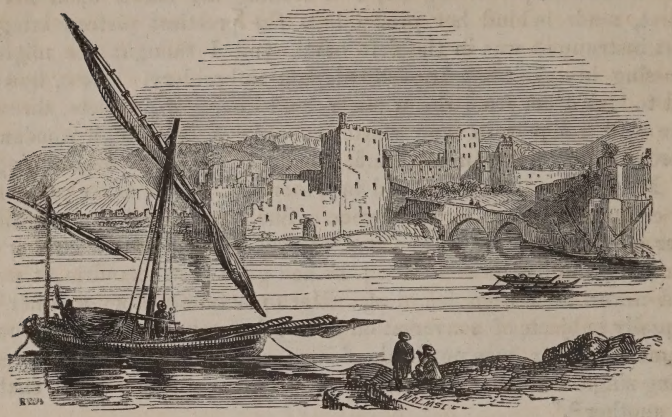
* Major Skinner, Overland Journey to India. London, 1836.

† Cairo, Petra, and Damascus, in 1839, by John Kinnear, Esq. London, 1841.



Old Castles at the entrance of the Harbour of Beyroot.

CHAPTER III.

Environs of Beyroot.

A beautiful plain, varied with small wooded heights, lies at the foot of majestic Lebanon, and, stretching out westward, forms the promontory of Beyroot—a triangular projection about five miles in length, beyond the general line of the coast, and measuring about as much across its base. The town itself is charmingly situate about an hour north-east of the extreme point or cape, on the northern slope of a hill gently shelving to the sea. Beneath is the little ruined harbour, once swarming with the small craft of the adventurous Phenicians, but which was filled up from motives of policy by Fakr ed Deen, the celebrated Druse Emeer, in the seventeenth century. Its entrance is marked by two picturesque old towers, one of which crowns a rock in the midst of the sea, connected with the shore only by an old causeway of three unequal arches. About a mile and a half to the east, a small bend of the shore terminates in the projecting headland on which the lazaretto stands. Beyond this point the land recedes rather suddenly, and then stretches out again with a graceful undulating sweep, enclosing the wide crescent bay of St. George, up to where Lebanon itself rushes out seawards to form the north-eastern horn, with its celebrated pass overhanging the mouth of the Nahr el Kelb, the ancient Lycus. The river of Beyroot empties itself into the southern corner or bight, at the further side of the headland above-mentioned, about two miles from the town.

Immediately beyond the walls of the town, on the land side, a labyrinth of intersecting paths and lanes, bordered by enormous cactuses that bend and form a canopy over head, leads through the mulberry groves and among the thickly-scattered kiosks, over knolls, from whose summits the eye takes in a glorious range of scenery. Let us ascend to the roof of one of the houses

in the gardens to the south-west. Beneath us lies the town with its domes, its minarets, its embattled walls, and its old fortresses overgrown with a forest of creeping plants, blossoms, and wild fig-trees; then the broad bay, with the anchored barks heaving dreamily on its swelling bosom; and beyond it the sombre masses of the mountain chain stretching away towards Tripoli. Eastward, the mighty wall of Lebanon stands before you in indescribable majesty. Looking up at its gleaming white ridges from this position, we have no difficulty in accounting for the name of Lebanon, that is, the "Milky Mountain." The terrace plots of cultivation that climb its flanks are here concealed from view; so that the whole mountain side seems composed only of immense masses of naked whitish rock, severed by deep wild ravines, running down precipitously to the plain. No one would suspect among these rocks the existence of a multitude of delicious glens and thriving villages, inhabited by a numerous population of mountaineers, hardy, industrious, and brave.

Between us and the foot of the mountain extends a broad region of undulating green wood, full of beauty. In the foreground is a richly cultivated plain, overgrown with trees that completely hide the soil, and sprinkled with white houses and roofs, like chalky islands in a sea of verdure; the view is then narrowed in by a graceful hill crowned with a Greek convent, the blue domes of which are overtopped by the umbrella-like heads of a few spreading pine-trees. The sides of the hill descend to the sea by a series of terraces, propped up with stone walls and thickly planted with olives and mulberries. Beyond the hill there is a second plain, where the river winds its lengthened way through woods of evergreen oak; this plain extends the whole way to the gilded flanks of the mountains. The mountains do not tower up at once from their base; they begin with hills, like huge blocks of stone, some rounded, others almost square, each partially covered with vegetation on their summits, and sustaining a village or a monastery glittering in the sun. Their sides, of cream-coloured stone, rent and shattered by earthquakes, gleam and sparkle in the chequered light. Broader masses succeed these lower eminences, topped with platforms of one or two leagues in width, furrowed with the deep beds of torrents and dark precipitous glens. Beyond these platforms the mountains begin to rise almost perpendicularly, but still dotted here and there with black patches of cedars and pines, with now and then exhibiting a convent almost inaccessible, and looking as if suspended on the very verge of the precipice.

Lastly, behind this second chain the true Lebanon rears its lofty head, too remote to enable the eye to judge of the forms of its sides or the character of its surface. Its masses melt indefinitely into the transparent air of which they seem to make a part. The sun appears to rest eternally on the gilded angles of its crests, the varied tints of its rays rendering them undistinguishable now from the snow that remains on their highest points till the middle of summer, and now from the purple clouds of morning that float like enchanted islands in the blue expanse of heaven. From noon till two or three o'clock the entire summit of the mountain is involved in a blaze of radiance.

If we turn our eyes downwards from gazing on the mountains, they rest everywhere only on the majestic heads of the palm-trees here and there

overhanging the houses of the Arabs, or the undulating tops of the pines that tuft the plain and the hill-sides, or hedge-rows of cactuses and other succulent plants, whose heavy leaves curve and droop like sculptured decorations over the low walls sustaining the terraces. These walls are so clothed with lichens, ivy, wild vines, flowering bulbous plants of every hue, and tufted herbage of every kind, that the stones of which they are constructed are quite invisible: nothing is to be seen but ramparts of verdure and flowers.

The human figures seen in your rambles impart a living interest to these lovely scenes, and often carry you back in imagination to the patriarchal ages. Women with their water-pitchers of antique form on their heads or shoulders, like Rebecca, walk to or from the wells with a gait that queens might envy; others, seated under the trees before their doors, are embroidering carpets of rich and varied colours; others are winding silk, having fixed the threads against two trees, between which they pace slowly, singing as they go; weavers, who have in like manner stretched their warp from tree to tree, walk backwards, throwing the shuttle, which is returned to them by a fellow-workman; infants are sleeping in their rush cradles, or on mats laid in the shade, or hung from the olive branches; the large Syrian sheep, with their huge trailing tails, too heavy to be able to move, are comfortably reposing in holes dug on purpose in the fresh mould before the door: to complete this sylvan picture, there are usually one or two handsome goats with silky pendent ears like those of our spaniels, a cow, and the horse of the master of the house, caparisoned and ready to be mounted: he is a part of the family, and seems interested in all that is said and done around him. When the hour for refreshment arrives, the repast is spread in the open air, and whole families may be seen grouped round the primitive table, under the shade of some nodding palm, or

Syrian Sheep.

> "Sycamore oft musical with bees:
> Such tents the patriarchs loved."

The white mulberry, so extensively cultivated both in the highlands and the plains, is destined principally for rearing silk-worms. The trees, which are purposely kept low for the greater convenience in gathering the leaves, are planted in rows, and if they grow in open ground, the plough is passed among them several times a year. Vegetables are sometimes grown between the rows, but generally the ground is kept clear and carefully weeded. These useful trees serve another purpose of some importance, though secondary to the making of silk. The first crop of leaves is eaten off by the silk-worms,

and by the time these have begun to spin their cocoons, the trees are nearly bare: the branches are then all cut off close to the stem, and used for fuel. In a few days new branches shoot out, which are soon covered with leaves; this second crop is gathered in baskets and given to the sheep and cows, and appears, indeed, to be the chief food of these animals for many months in the autumn and the beginning of winter. The entire absence of rain during the long hot summer burns up whatever grass may have been on the ground in the spring and the early part of summer; but the mulberry-trees, which have much care bestowed on them, and are watered by channels from a stream, or by hand, retain their greenness in that mild climate to a very late season; even in the month of December their leaves are as fresh and green as in midsummer. The fibres of the new leaves, which the silk-worms reject, are also carefully collected, and preserved in the dry state for the use of the cattle. The horses, mules, and asses, are fed with barley and straw, which is cut fine by the manner in which the grain is threshed out. For a few weeks in the spring they are kept on green barley. The camel is generally fed on weeds, which are gathered for that purpose. These patient drudges perform most of the heavy transport from the mountains to the coast; and it is surprising to see what masses of timber are often laid on their backs. It is not unusual to see a single camel loaded with a beam from fifteen to twenty feet long, and a foot or more in diameter. With this cumbrous and awkward load bound on to the huge pack-saddle on the animal's back, he traverses roads which require some fortitude for a man to ride over. One driver attends each, who may, at the more dangerous passes, take hold of the beam and aid in keeping it steady. The poor beast usually reaches his place of destination in safety; but sometimes, overloaded or worn down with the length of the way, he misses his step and tumbles down a precipice, or is crushed to death under his merciless burthen.

The whole southern and western portion of the promontory of Beyroot is composed of exceedingly fine sand, thrown up into hills by the winds. On this spot, about half an hour south-east of the town, there exists a grove of pine-trees, planted by the celebrated Emeer of the Druses, Fakr ed Deen, (or, as he is commonly called, Faccardine), for the purpose, it is said, of arresting the progress of the shifting sands, which threatened destruction to the town and its rich environs. Thus far the Emeer's object has been fulfilled, and another good effect has ensued which he could not have foreseen; for the town, which was previously unhealthy, has ceased to be so since the trees were planted: but the grove is not sufficiently extensive, and the danger threatened by the sands is but partially overcome. The Duc de Raguse, who has looked upon the town with an eye practised in engineering speculations, asserts that the sands are advancing towards it by a constant and regular progression; they gain every year from four-and-twenty to thirty yards, and yet no one thinks of doing anything to stay them. Houses, and even trees, become completely buried in a few months, gradually disappearing under the continual accumulation of the almost impalpable grains. The same fate awaits the town, and the period when it will be consummated may even be calculated with tolerable precision. This is a melancholy spectacle even for a stranger: the inhabitants of Beyroot seem to

take no heed of it, and enjoy the present moment without concerning themselves about the future.

This dreary and desolate region is an exact representation in miniature of the Great Desert: it is a strip of the Egyptian waste transplanted to the foot of Lebanon, and surrounded by magnificent oases. To complete the illusion, after you have wandered but ten minutes through its labyrinths, you may find yourself utterly ignorant of your position and bearings. The sandy hillocks conceal the horizon on all sides: no track of man or beast is discernible on the unstable ground, that shifts with every breeze; and all around you is as dismal a wilderness as imagination can conceive,—the aspect of a storm without its noise, but with its images of wreck and death. This red sand, the Arabs tell you, is not brought hither by the winds, nor accumulated by the sea, but thrown up by a subterranean torrent communicating with the deserts of Gaza and El Arish: they hold it for an established fact, that there are springs of sand as well as springs of water; and, in confirmation of this opinion, they point to the manifest difference in colour and other physical characters between the sands of this desert and those of the sea-shore.

A growth of two centuries and a quarter has reared up Fakr ed Deen's grove into a noble forest; the stems of the trees shoot up without a branch to a height of from sixty to eighty feet, and their motionless broad arms locking together, form an immense verdant canopy over a soil as soft as velvet to the tread. Except upon the beaten paths that wind between the trunks of the trees, the ground is everywhere covered with a light downy turf, thickly set with flowers of the brightest red; the bulbs of the wild hyacinths are so large that they do not break beneath the horses' hoofs. Through the vistas of the living colonnades, the eye discovers on one side hills of white and reddish sand masking the sea; and between them and the mountains a broad valley, full of cultivation, containing the largest olive-grove in Syria; on the other side are the river and its valley, and a corner of the bay, resembling a little lake, so completely land-locked does it appear; Lebanon forms with its rocky curtain the back-ground of the scene, and you may trace all its sinuosities for a range of forty miles, to where the White Cape crosses the view like a wall near the horizon. So well defined is the light, and so pure the air, that you can distinguish miles off, high up the mountain, the forms of the cedar or caroob-trees, or the great eagles, floating without a motion of their sail-broad wings in the viewless ocean of the air.

A man of the least imagination might return, day after day, with unabated zest to this delightful spot, and while away the hours in dreamy contemplative indolence, till the genius of the place distilled its nepenthe into his restless Frank soul, and made it wholly Oriental. The loveliness of the landscape, and its strikingly Asiatic character, the genial air, the mellowed light, the faint perfumes wafted on the breeze, the voices of unknown birds blending with the melancholy music of the wind in the ancient pine-tops, and the measured booming of the sea,—all these lull and entrance the mind, and dispose it to a sort of extatic somnambulism,—the very mood in which to listen with an acquiescent faith to tales of jans, peris, rukhs, enchanted princesses, cloud-built palaces, and flying horses. And hark! the tinkling of the camel-bells, where the long caravan laden with the merchandise of Damascus winds with noiseless footfall between the trees. Yonder rides a

troop of ladies, muffled in white veils like shrouds, with crowds of children dressed in scarlet and gold gambolling round their horses' feet. Bands of poor despised Jews, mounted on asses, plod their weary way, carrying their little ones on both arms. In the open ground are Arabs flinging the jereed, and careering with wild cries on horses, whose manes literally sweep the ground; whilst in another direction groups of Turks sit smoking their long pipes in front of a coffee-shed made of boughs, or perform their devotions in total abstraction from all surrounding objects.

A very pleasant ramble may be made along the shore to the west of the town. Just outside the walls in this direction is the Mohammedan burial-ground, a most lovely spot, where the dead sleep well, nor are they forgotten by the living. Few things strike the traveller in the East more than the tender piety of the Moslems towards their dead: their habits in this respect present an intense contrast with our own, and one that is wholly to our disadvantage. We, boasting a faith that robs death of its sting and the grave of its victory, habitually violate the consoling spirit of our religion; we picture to ourselves death under the most revolting emblems; we make the last resting-places of our kindred ugly and dismal to the eye, and not to be thought of but with shuddering repugnance. Why is this? Whence this unchristian, this Egyptian parade of death's heads and cross-bones—this perverse brooding over the horrors of the charnel-house? If we hated the memory of our departed friends, how could we more strongly display our aversion than by thrusting away from us their living images, and forcing ourselves to think of them only as what humanity shrinks from with loathing? It is otherwise in the East. There "they bury a friend, and the next day they plant flowers on his grave; and ever afterwards they tend and water them, visiting them regularly once a-week; and always when they walk out for health or pleasure, turning their steps habitually to the burial-ground." The tenant of the tomb is, to the last, numbered as one of the family; and in every household you may find, among bearded men and aged matrons, the happy faith of the little maid in Wordsworth's well-known lines. It is not the Moslems who mourn as those that have no hope: happier than too many Westerns, they can still believe and pray.

There is something exceedingly touching in the little artless contrivances by which the people of the East endeavour to lighten the gloom of the grave, and to connect it with all that is most beautiful and life-like in nature. They plant on it myrtles, roses, and other fragrant shrubs, and deck it day by day with fresh-culled flowers; they hang over it cages of singing birds, which are fed morning and evening with religious care; they make receptacles for water in the tombstone, that the fowls of the air may drink thence, and thus something living acknowledge the charity of him who sleeps below; and they take care to leave a square opening in the side of the masonry, that the narrow house may not be utterly shut up from the light and the breath of heaven. The women, who are the most regular frequenters of the burial-ground, often carry their food with them: the tombstone is their table; they leave a place for the dead to sit with them, putting the best morsels before it; and they talk with him as if he was living by their side.

Such are the tokens of affection bestowed on the dead by the living among the Turks, a people whose domestic virtues we so ignorantly and grossly calumniate. But though they are so honourably distinguished above all the Eastern races in this respect, the usages we have mentioned are by no means exclusively confined to them. We cannot forbear from quoting, in illustration of this subject, a few lines from an old Romaic ditty exceedingly popular in Greece. It is entitled "The Grave of Demos," and purports to embody the last commands of that renowned klepht and captain, to his sons and nephews assembled round his death-bed. The concluding lines are to this effect:—

> "No more shall Demos lead the klephts; his hour is come to die:
> Then make me a grave, ye sons of mine, and make it broad and high;
> With room to load, and to wield my gun, and to stand as befits a klepht;
> And on the right hand let there be a little window left;
> So the breezy spring, with the swallow's wing, to my bones shall find its way,
> And the nightingale cheer my buried ear with news of the merry May."*

The burial-ground of Beyroot was the scene of a fierce conflict between the Greeks and the Turks, when the former made an unsuccessful descent on the town during the war of independence. A spot is pointed out on the cliff where two of the combatants, grappling together in mortal strife, rolled over the precipice, and were dashed to pieces.

There is a small dockyard near the town, on this part of the coast, where a good many hands are employed in building little vessels for the coasting trade. As soon as one of these barks is finished and ready to be launched, it is sharply watched day and night, in consequence of a curious superstition prevalent among Arab mariners. They consider every vessel as a bride of the sea, which must pass pure and unsullied into the arms of its mighty bridegroom, if it would hope for his favour, and be safe from his vengeance. Now, should it come to pass that a frail damsel once set foot on board the virgin bark, and there uttered certain words, all her own sins and peccadilloes would be immediately transferred to the destined bride of the sea, and she herself would stand once more spotless as a babe.†

Beyond the cemetery there is a little cove, formed by a rent in the rock, which it would be morally impossible for the rambler to quit without enjoying the luxury of a swim in the sea. There is a fine sandy bottom, as smooth and firm as a carpeted floor; the high cliffs provide the modest bather with a natural toilet room, where Dian's self might fearlessly disrobe; and what is better still, you may see, stretching from horn to horn of the tiny bay, a low reef, just showing its back above the water, and effectually securing you from the impertinence of the sharks that abound in these latitudes.

Continuing our walk, we arrive at the extreme point of the promontory, the Ras-el-Beyroot, where the wave-fretted rock rushes vertically down to the sea, by a precipice two hundred feet high. Some fifty yards from the cliff an immense rock rises above the waves, perforated by a natural cavern, thirty feet high, affording shelter to thousands of blue pigeons and sea-swallows.

You are here out of sight of the town, and the solitude is perfect: it is impossible to conceive any music more grand and impressive than the rushing

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* Firmenich, Τραγοῦδια Ρωμαΐκα. Berlin, 1840. † Hackländer.

of the waters round the rocky island, and among the deep caverns and fissures in the cliff, or any spectacle stranger or more imposing than this scene of perpetual warfare between rock and flood. Earthquakes, and the ceaselessly reiterated shock of the waves, have rent and dislocated the solid mass of the coast, torturing it into the most frantic forms, and strewing the shore with huge fragments of every shape the wildest fancy could conceive. There are battlemented towers and pinnacles, all covered with the nests of sea-birds, and tunnels through which you hear the imprisoned wave bellowing beneath your feet. In some places the rock is pierced with tubular openings, through which, at each return of the waves, vast columns of water shoot up many feet into the air. There is always a very heavy swell upon the coast even when there is no wind: the mass of the waters is not parted into billows, but sweeps onward in one compact body, like an army charging in line, and thunders against the rocky wall with the force and din of ten thousand battering rams.

Fully to appreciate the scene, it should be visited towards the close of the day, when you may enjoy the cool breeze, and behold the glorious sunset turning the Mediterranean into a sheet of liquid fire. Long rays, or pyramidal columns of light, tinged with faint purple, shoot up to the zenith; the snowy ridges of Lebanon retain their rich hues for some instants; and when the last point of the declining luminary has sunk below the horizon, the stars rush out, and the moon shines in full splendour; for in these latitudes the setting sun gives place to night with scarcely an interval of twilight.

> "No pale gradations quench his ray,
> No twilight dews his wrath allay;
> With disk like battle target red,
> He rushes to his burning bed,
> Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
> Then sinks at once—and all is night."

The gates of the town being now closed, it will be necessary to return by water; and, miserable as are the small Arab boats, it is a very delightful thing to go rocking along in them over the bay, and to gaze on the inconceivable beauties of the heavens, where the stars appear, not, as with us, mere sparks of different magnitude and brightness set upon the concave surface of the firmament, but brilliant orbs, floating at different and immeasurable distances, through the infinite ether; or to watch the long luminous band that marks the track of the boat through the phosphorescent waters; or the shoals of flying fish, darting for a moment through the air to

Arab Boat.

escape the pursuit of their persecutors. The measured plash of the oars, the creaking of your crazy Arab craft, and the booming of the surges on the shore, break, with no ungentle disturbance, the charmed stillness of a Syrian evening: and when the perfumed land-breeze, that always springs up after sunset, wafts to your ear the howling of jackals, and the rude music of some Arab festivity, even those sounds are not heard without pleasure, though both of them decidedly such as are "by distance made more sweet."

About a league to the north-east of Beyroot there is a hill called by the Greeks San Dimitri, belonging to the lower range, at the base of Lebanon. The reader is about to accompany Lamartine and his only child in a day's excursion they made to San Dimitri and other adjacent points, but a fortnight before poor little Julia de Lamartine's sudden death. We give the account of the whole day nearly as we find it in the original, merely omitting a few passages, and here and there slightly pruning away a weak luxuriance of style, that too often mars the effect of the author's otherwise captivating sketches. The party set out from the town at an early hour on the 19th of November, that month proverbially dark and dreary in our climate, but sunny as a poet's May in Syria.

"After pursuing our way," says Lamartine, "for half an hour, under the arching cactuses that border all the paths in the plain, we began to ascend, by narrow and steeper tracks, to a series of platforms, affording a succession of wider and wider views over the champagne, the sea, and the mountains. These small platforms are all encircled by forest trees unknown in our climes, nor, unfortunately, am I acquainted with their names. Their trunks, the set of their branches, and the new and strange forms of their tops—conical, dishevelled, pyramidal, or expanding like wings—give a grace and a novelty of aspect to this girdle of vegetation, sufficiently characteristic of Asia. Their foliage, too, is of every form and hue, from the dark verdure of the cypress to the leaden green of the olive, and the yellow tinge of the lemon and the orange; from the broad leaves of the Chinese mulberry—one of which would make an ample parasol for a child—to the delicate leaflets of the tea-plant, the pomegranate, and the innumerable shrubs, with fringes dentellated like curled parsley, that hang like light draperies of vegetable lace between you and the horizon. Along the bottom of these woody margins runs a margin of green sward, all shining with flowers. The surfaces of the platforms are planted with barley; and here and there, in their angles, two or three palm-trees, or the dark and rounded dome of the colossal caroob, mark the place where the husbandman has built his vine-clustered cabin, within a trench, defended by green palisades of the Indian fig, all covered with their thorny fruit, and where he cultivates his little orange garden, and his beds of stocks and carnations, to deck the locks of his daughters. When, by chance, the path led us to the door of these sequestered nests, we saw in the faces of their happy and kind inhabitants no look of surprise, sullenness, or anger. With smiling faces turned on Julia's beauty, they addressed to us the pious salutation of the Orientals, *Sala el Kaeer*—may the day be blessed for you. Some of them begged us to tarry under their palm-trees; they brought us, according to their means, a mat or a carpet, and presented us

with milk, fruit, or flowers, from the gardens. We accepted their gifts in some instances, and promised to return and bring them, on our parts, something from Europe. But their politeness and their hospitality were dictated by no interested motives. They love the Franks, who can cure all maladies; who know the virtue of all plants, and adore the same God as themselves.

"We climbed from one of these platforms to another, always encountering the same scenes, the same girdles of trees, the same mosaic of vegetation on the soil they encircled: only, as we ascended, the magnificent horizon continually enlarged, the lower platforms lay stretched before us like a chess-board of many colours, in which the hedge-row shrubs, drawn together by the effect of distance, formed sombre patches of woodland. Now and then we descended into the dells between the hills—dells a thousand times more umbrageous, more delicious still than the heights they parted; all curtained by the trees of the terraces that rose above them, all deluged with floods of odorous vegetation, but each allowing, at their narrow openings, a peep over the plain and the sea. The elevated floor of these little valleys completely cuts off all view of the lowlands, so that they seem to open directly on the sea; their trees stand in dark relief against the blue waves, and we sometimes amused ourselves, as we sat at the foot of a palm-tree, in watching the sails of the vessels, which were in reality four or five leagues distant from us, gliding slowly from tree to tree, as though they were floating on a lake of which these dells formed the immediate shore.

"At last, guided by mere chance, we arrived at the most complete, the most enchanting spot of all.

"It is an upper valley, open to the east and the west, and lapped in the last chain of hills descending to the larger valley, through which flows the river of Beyroot. It is impossible to describe the prodigious vegetation that clothes its bed and sides; though the walls on either hand are of rock, they are so covered with lichens of every kind, so oozy with the moisture that trickles through them, drop by drop, so clothed with tufts of heather, fern, odoriferous herbs, ivy, and other creepers and shrubs rooted in their invisible clefts, that you cannot help thinking it is the living rock itself that thus vegetates. The whole is one rich carpet, one or two feet thick; a close velvet pile of vegetation, of rare hues and tints, scattered all over with clusters of unknown flowers, of a thousand forms, a thousand odours; now sleeping motionless as the mimic flowers in the drapery of our rooms, now swayed by the sea-breeze, and undulating in perfumed waves, as though it were a rippling river of verdure and blossoms you beheld. At these moments the breeze that wafts you its freight of balmy sweetness, startles from their couch swarms of brilliant insects, and countless birds that fly and perch upon the neighbouring trees: the air is filled with their voices answering each other, with the hum of bees, and with that low murmur of the fields in spring, that to Fancy's ear sounds like the noise of the myriad operations of vegetable life on the earth's surface. The condensed night dews fall, drop by drop, from every leaf, sparkle on every blade of grass, and preserve the freshness of this little dell, when the sun has climbed high in the heavens, and his rays begin to glint over the tall trees and the rocks that bound it.

"We spread our breakfast here on a stone near a cavern, where two gazelles, startled by the sound of our steps, had taken refuge. We had no thought of violating the asylum of the pretty creatures: the gazelle is to these verdant wildernesses what the lamb is to our pastures, or the tame pigeon to the roofs or yards of our cabins.

"The whole valley was covered with the same wavy tapestry of foliage, moss, and blossoms: we could not suppress an exclamation at every step. I do not remember ever to have beheld before so much life in nature, accumulated and overflowing, in so small a space. We followed the course of the dell through its whole extent, sitting down from time to time where the shade was most inviting, and here and there striking the turf with the palms of our hands, and throwing up sparks of dew, puffs of fragrance, and clouds of insects, that rose out of it like golden dust.

"As you approach the western opening of the valley the patch of sky before you enlarges, the boundary walls on either hand diminish in altitude, the path slopes gently downwards beneath your feet; the snowy peaks of Lebanon tower up amid a sky quivering with hot vapours. Turning your eye downwards from the eternal snows, it rests on the black clumps of pines, cypresses, or cedars, then on the deep ravines, where the brooding shadows have their nests; and, lastly, on those golden pinnacles of rock, before the feet of which extend the Maronite highlands and the villages of the Druses: the whole panorama ends in a fringe of olive woods, terminating on the skirts of the plain. The plain itself, which stretches between the heights among which we stood and the foot of Lebanon, may be about a league in breadth. It runs a tortuous course, and our view only took in about two leagues of its length; the rest was hidden from us by knolls clothed with black pine woods. The river of Beyroot, which issues some miles from where we stood, from one of the deepest and most craggy gorges of Lebanon, cuts the plain in two. It winds its graceful way in a full stream, sometimes compressed between its sedgy banks, that look like plantations of sugar cane; sometimes escaping to overspread the grassy sward, or to dally with the mastich bushes; and here and there throwing out small bright lakes into the plain. Its banks are everywhere enriched with verdure; and we saw herds of asses, horses, goats, black oxen, and white milch kine, spread all along the river's course, and Arab herdsmen fording it on the backs of their camels. Further on, too, on the foremost declivities of Lebanon, we saw Maronite monks, dressed in their black frocks and cowls, following their ploughs in silence beneath the olives of their fields. We heard the convent bells summoning them from time to time to prayer: at the sound they stopped their

oxen, laid the goad against the handle of the plough, and, kneeling down for some minutes, let their cattle breathe, while they themselves put up their appeals to Heaven.

"Pursuing our way, and beginning to descend towards the river, we suddenly caught sight of the sea, till then concealed from us by the valley's sides, and the wider embouchure of the Nahr Beyroot emptying itself into it. The river is crossed, not far from its mouth, by a Roman bridge nearly in ruins, with very lofty arches and without parapets. A long caravan from Damascus, on its way to Aleppo, was crossing it at this moment; we saw them, some on dromedaries, some on horseback, issuing one by one from the reeds that masked the butment of the bridge, ascending slowly to the summit of the arches, where they formed a picture for a moment, with their beasts and showy costume projected on the blue ground of the sea, then descending on the other side and disappearing, with their long string of sumpter asses and camels, behind the clumps of tall reeds, rhododendrons, and plane-trees on that bank of the river. A little further on they came again in sight on the sandy beach, where the high waves rolled their fringe of foam under the feet of their cattle. Finally, they were lost to sight behind the huge pointed rocks of a promontory jutting out into the sea, and limiting the view on that side. The sea was of two colours at the mouth of the river—blue and green in the distance, and sparkling with moving diamonds; yellow and tarnished at the place where the waters of the river struggled with the waves, and tinged them with the ochrous sands they sweep incessantly into the bay. Seventeen anchored vessels were drowsily swaying to and fro on the broad swell, and their masts rose and stooped like long reeds in the wind. The masts of some were bare as wintry trees; others, with their sails spread to dry in the sun, were like the large white birds of those seas, that float through the air without a visible vibration of their wings. The bosom of the bay, brighter than the sky above it, partially reflected the snows of Lebanon and the embattled walls of the monasteries on its foremost cliffs. Some fishing-boats were scudding along at full sail, and steering for the river. The valley beneath our feet; the slopes towards the plain; the snaky river glistening between its verdant banks; the boundless sea with its rocky coves; the huge mass of Lebanon with its manifold accidents of structure; those snow clad pyramids, like silvery spires, lifting their starry heads to heaven; the hum of insects, the warbling of the birds, the lowing of the oxen, and the almost human wailings of the camels in the caravans; the hollow and periodical murmur of the broad surges on the shore; the cloudless dome of the glowing sky, broken only by the mountain peaks, or by the conical tops of the tall trees; the warmth, the perfume of the air, in which all this seemed to swim like a reflected image in the transparent water of a Swiss lake—all these aspects, sounds, lights, shades, and impressions, composed the most sublime and bewitching scene that ever charmed my eyes.

"We mounted our horses again on the plain by the river side, crossed the bridge, and ascended some of the woody slopes of the Lebanon, as far as to the first monastery, seated like a fortress on a rocky pedestal. The monks knew me from the report of their Arabs, and received me in their convent.

I went over the building and examined their cells, the refectory, and the chapels. The monks, returning from labour, were engaged in the court-yard in unyoking their oxen and their buffaloes; the yard looked just like that of a large farm, full of ploughs, cattle, heaps of manure, fowls, and all the implements and appendages of agricultural life. The monks went through their work without noise or clamour, but without any affectation of silence; like men actuated by native feelings of decorum, but not controlled by rigid and inflexible rules. Their looks were gentle, serene, and breathed a spirit of peace and contentment befitting a community of labourers. When the dinner-bell rang they entered the refectory, not all together, but one or two at a time, as each had dispatched the business of the moment. The meal consisted, as usual, of two or three cakes of dough, dried rather than baked on hot stones, water, and half a dozen olives preserved in oil; to this is sometimes added a little cheese or clotted milk, and this is the whole bill-of-fare of these cenobites: they take their food standing, or seated on the ground. All our articles of furniture are unknown to them. After being present at their dinner, and eating a bit of cake and drinking a glass of excellent wine set before us by the superior, we went to see some of the cells; they are all alike, small chambers five or six feet square, with a rush mat and a carpet for their sole furniture, and a few portraits of saints nailed to the walls, an Arabic Bible, and some Syrian manuscripts for their sole decoration. A long thatched gallery leads to all these cells. The view from the windows of this monastery, and of almost all the others, is admirable: the first slopes of Lebanon, the plain, and the river of Beyroot, the airy domes of the pine woods breaking the red horizon of the sandy waste; lastly, the sea everywhere embayed within its capes, and its gnarled and fretted rocks, with the white sails cleaving its surface in every direction; such is the prospect continually before the eyes of the Maronite monks. They made us many presents of dried fruits and skins of wine, which were laid on the backs of asses, and we left them to return to Beyroot by another road.

Gazelles.

"Our descent was by a winding course of steep steps cut in the detached blocks of yellow and fragile sand-stone, that covers all the lower regions of Lebanon. A few shrubs and herbs find root in the interstices of the rocks, and we met with splendid flowers like our garden tulips, but a great deal larger. We started several gazelles and a few jackals, that make their lairs in the hollows of these rocks; and great numbers of partridges, quails, and woodcocks took wing at the sound of our horses' feet.

"When we reached the plain, we found ourselves once more amidst the cultivation of the vine, barley, and the palm; we advanced about midway through this rich vegetation, and were soon at the foot of a broad conical hill, covered with stone pines, with broad openings between, through which we descried at a distance herds of camels and flocks of goats. The hill concealed from us the Nahr Beyroot, which we intended to cross at its southern part. After riding about a quarter of an hour under the lofty arcades of the beautiful spreading pines, we suddenly heard loud shouts, the noisy tread of multitudes of men, women, and children, approaching us, the rattling of drums and the sounds of the pipe and fife. In an instant we were surrounded by five or six hundred wild-looking beings, whom we took for Arabs. Their chiefs, dressed in magnificent garments, but dirty and in tatters, advanced towards us at the head of their musicians; they bowed, and addressed us apparently in very respectful and courteous terms, but we did not understand a word they said. Their gestures and their bawling, seconded by the gestures and bawling of the whole tribe, presently gave us an insight into their meaning. They besought us, and indeed constrained us, to accompany them into the heart of the wood, where their camp was pitched. They were one of those tribes of Koords who come from the neighbouring provinces of Persia to pass the winter sometimes in the plains adjoining Damascus, sometimes in those of Western Syria, bringing with them their families and their flocks. They take possession of an abandoned wood, plain, or hill, and make themselves at home there for five or six months. Much more barbarous than the Arabs, their invasions and their neighbourhood are generally much dreaded: they are the armed gipsies of the East.

"After riding on for some minutes, accompanied by the wild music and the shouts of that multitude of men, women, and children, who stared upon us with a half merry, half savage curiosity, we found ourselves in the midst of the camp, before the tent of one of the sheykhs of the tribe. Making us dismount, they committed our horses, which they admired very much, to the care of some young men, and strewed Caramanian carpets for us to sit on at the foot of a tree. The sheykh's slaves presented us with pipes and coffee, and the women of the tent brought camel's milk for Julia. The appearance of this camp of nomade barbarians in the midst of the gloomy pine wood, is worth describing.

"The trees stood wide apart at this point, and broad openings intersected the wood. At the foot of each tree a family had pitched its tent, which, in most instances, was a plain piece of black cloth of goats'-hair, fastened with a rope to the trunk of the tree, and supported at the other side by two stakes driven into the ground. Frequently there was nothing properly deserving the name of tent; the cloth did not encompass the family, but merely hung as a screen, sheltering the owners and their fire from the wind and sun. No furniture was to be seen except black earthen water-pitchers, laid on their sides, a few goatskin bottles, sabres and long guns suspended from the branches, mats, carpets, and male and female garments strewed here and there on the ground. Some of these Koords had two or three square chests, painted red, and ornamented with gilt nails, to contain their effects. I saw

but two or three horses in the whole tribe; most families had only a camel, that lay ruminating, with its long neck raised and its intelligent head stretched towards the opening of the tent; a few handsome goats, with long black silky hair and pendent ears, sheep, and buffaloes; in addition to these, almost all had one or two superb white greyhounds, of remarkable strength and stature. These dogs, contrary to Mohammedan custom, were in good condition and well cared for: they seemed to recognise their masters, whence I presume that these tribes employ them in hunting. The sheykhs appeared to possess absolute authority, and the least sign from them restored the order and silence which had been interrupted by the tumult of our arrival. Some inquisitive children having been guilty of slight acts of rudeness towards us, they had them immediately removed to another part of the camp. The men were generally tall, robust, handsome, and well made: their dress did not bespeak indigence, but slovenliness. Several of them had silk vests, brocaded with silver or gold thread, and blue silk pelisses trimmed with rich furs. Their arms were richly chased, and embossed with silver. The women were neither kept secluded nor veiled; they were even half naked, especially the young girls from ten to fifteen years of age; their whole dress consisting of a cotton or silk shift, that left the neck and bosom exposed, a girdle, and a pair of wide trousers that reached a little below the knee; their legs and feet were bare, and they all had silver anklets. Their jet black hair hung in braids down their backs, adorned with strings of coins, and they wore round their necks and loins imbricated bands of piastres, that tinkled with every motion of their bodies. These women were neither tall, nor fair, nor modest, nor graceful, like the Syrian Arab women; nor had they the wild, shy air of the Bedouin females: they were in general small, meagre, and sunburnt, but joyous, lively, active creatures, and they danced and sang incessantly to the accompaniment of their merry native music. They manifested no embarrassment at our looks, no shame at their almost naked appearance before the men of the tribe; the men themselves seemed to exercise no authority over them; they only laughed at their importunate curiosity regarding us, and gently and playfully pushed them away when they pressed too impetuously upon us. Some of the young girls had a great deal of petulant prettiness; their black eyes derived great vivacity from the surmeh with which their lids were stained. Their legs and hands were dyed the colour of mahogany; the very brilliancy of their teeth, enhanced by the blue hue of their tatooed lips, and by their sallow complexions, gave a wild, but not savage expression to their features and their smiles: they were like Provençal or Neapolitan girls, only with higher foreheads, a freer play of the limbs and body, franker smiles, and more natural manners. They had faces to be long remembered as differing in character from all others.

"There were two or three hundred individuals of the tribe forming a circle round us. When we had fully satisfied our curiosity, we made signs that we wished to mount our horses again: they were immediately brought us, and as they were frightened by the strange scene, and by the tambourines and the shouting, the sheykh made two of the women carry Julia in their arms to the verge of the wood, whither we were accompanied by the whole tribe. Before we rode away they offered us a goat and a young she-camel

as a present, which we did not accept; but we gave them a handful of Turkish piastres, which the young girls divided among them, to add to their necklaces, and we presented two gold ghazees to the sheykh's wives. A little way beyond the wood we came again upon the river, which we forded; and under the rhododendrons on its banks we fell in with about a hundred girls belonging to the tribe we had left, who had been to Beyroot to buy pitchers and some pieces of cloth for a bride of the daughters of their people. They had halted on their return, and we found them dancing in the shade, each holding in her hand some piece of household goods or apparel, intended for their companion. They followed us a long way, uttering wild cries, and clinging to Julia's drapery, and to our horses' manes, to beg some pieces of money; we threw them some, upon which they scampered off, and dashed into the water on their way back to the camp."

CHAPTER IV.

Koords and Yezidis.

The original country of the Koords, known in modern geography by the name of Koordistan, is the chain of mountains whence issue the different branches of the Tigris, and which, surrounding the upper part of the great Zab, passes to the southward as far as the frontiers of the Irak Adjami, or Persian Irak.* This country is mentioned in the most ancient traditions and histories of the East, in which it is made the scene of several mythological events. The Koords are the same people as those mentioned by Xenophon, by the name of Carduchi, as having opposed the retreat of the Ten Thousand. This historian observes, that though shut in on all sides by the Persian empire, they had constantly braved the power of the Great King, and the arms of his satraps. They have changed but little in their modern state; for, though in appearance tributaries to the Porte, they pay very little respect to the orders of the Sultan, or of his Pashas.

Koordish Men and Women.

The Koords in general profess a very corrupted form of Mohammedanism:

* *Adjam* is the Arabic name for the Persians. Hence the *Achemenides* of the Greeks.

they reject many of the precepts of the Koran, and of the religious practices it prescribes. They have no mosques: for God, they say, is more appropriately worshipped in his own great temple beneath the sun: in fact, their indifference to the ordinances of Islamism amounts to a sort of practical pantheism. Many of them admit the sacred books of other religions, and profess an indiscriminate reverence for Moses, Christ, Mohammed, and the prophets of almost all the races that surround them.

The Koords are pastors, and live almost exclusively on milk and flesh. It is very rarely they apply themselves to the cultivation of the ground; agriculture appears to them so despicable an occupation, that at most they barely employ their slaves in cultivating a few vegetables or tobacco plants round their hovels.

A Man of the Jof Tribe, Koordistan.

They have never lost the nomadic instinct; though they generally pass the winter in villages consisting of huts of mud or dry stone, they very frequently change their abode. Materials they find in abundance, and the expense of building is a matter of no consideration. In summer they abandon all their villages to the myriads of fleas that infest them, and in an instant the women have constructed, at some distance from the winter quarters, a handsome camp of large and commodious goats' hair tents, regularly arranged, with the tent of the *sheyle* (the pontiff) or the emeer in the centre. In the intervals between the tents are roomy inclosures, fenced in with stakes and ropes, or thorns, in which the numerous cattle of each family is folded by night. A couple of hundred families, thus encamped, occupy a wide space of ground, and make a very picturesque appearance. There is an air of cleanliness about these summer encampments, strangely contrasted with the filthiness of the crowded and unwholesome winter quarters.

Though pastors, the Koords are a people of dauntless bravery; they are habituated from their childhood to the use of arms and to feats of horsemanship. Their breed of horses is small, but hardy, active, and full of spirit, and superior, perhaps, to every other breed in surefootedness.

A Turkish troop succeeded, in the year 1837, in capturing one of the most formidable chiefs among the Koords. His age was barely thirty, his figure was tall and finely formed; so handsome a Koord had never before fallen into the hands of the Osmanlees. He was led into the presence of Hafiz Pacha, and, had he been a vizier, he could not have been treated with more flattering attention by the generalissimo of the Sultan's forces. Hafiz Pacha and the cadi of the army exhausted all the arts

of persuasion to induce their prisoner to give them information respecting the movements and resources of the Koords; and the seraskier even went so far as to promise, that, if he replied frankly to his questions, he would make him colonel of one of his regiments.

"You are mistaken, Pasha," replied the captive Koord, "if you think to find in me another Revendouz Bey. Having once been a chief of the Koords, I will never be the chief of any other people; were I at the head of one of your regiments, the first thing I should do would be to turn my arms against you; and, Allah knows, I am no traitor. As for the disclosures you expect from me, you shall never receive them: fate has thrown me into your hands; do with me whatever you will."

Koordish Officer of Sulimania.

Despairing of effecting anything by fair means, Hafiz Pacha had recourse to torture. He began by sentencing the prisoner to receive five hundred bastinadoes on the soles of his feet. As the stout-hearted Koord lay on the ground, with his heels in the air, which the executioners were beating to a jelly, he coolly asked for a pipe; it was brought him, and, raising his head on his hand, he began to smoke with perfect composure. Amazement seized the two executioners at the sight of such unparalleled fortitude, and for awhile they forgot to strike. But the horrible punishment was renewed, and repeated on two successive days. On the third day the invincible Koord was stripped naked and placed in a cauldron of water, under which a fire was lighted. The same questions were reiterated to him; but not a word passed his lips.

"You do not answer," said Hafiz Pacha: "do you not hear me?"

The Koord raised his head, and, looking sternly round on his foes, said calmly, "Allah be thanked, my ears are not closed; but my tongue is dumb to your questions."

"What torture more severe can we think of to make the fellow speak?" said the cadi, to the seraskier.

An expression of fierce disdain lighted up the sufferer's features at these words. "No torture," he exclaimed, pointing to a man opposite him, "no torture could be more horrible to me than to see there, before my eyes, a dastard Koord, who has deserted his brethren, to consort with our foes!"

The Koord thus addressed, struck with sudden remorse, snatched a pistol from his girdle, put the muzzle in his mouth, and blew out his brains. The unfortunate chief expired soon after in the boiling water.

Antiquity has no grander example of patriotism to show than this: no soldier or chieftain, Greek or Roman, ever displayed more heroic fortitude than this young barbarian, whose name the world will never know.*

* B. Poujoulat, voyage en Orient.

The Koord is extremely jealous of his liberty. His subjection to the Porte is scarcely more than nominal, and the tribute he pays its pashas and governors is very trifling. There is a natural enmity between him and the Turk, whom he maltreats, and even kills, whenever he can do so with impunity. Christians are regarded with much more favour, and can travel much more securely among the Koords, than can the Osmanlees. The Koords are all robbers to a man, and this, perhaps, to a still greater degree than the Bedouins. Their propensities in this respect were severely repressed by Mohammed Ali's strong hand while he was master of Syria; but they are sure to break out again whenever they are favoured by circumstances.

On the day of the battle of Nezib, on which Ibrahim Pacha defeated the Sultan's forces, all the surrounding mountains and hills swarmed with Koord horsemen, impatiently watching the result to pounce upon the vanquished, whichever that might be. As they had an exalted opinion of the Sultan's strength, the majority of them hovered over the rear of the Egyptian army; but when they saw the Turks routed, they all rushed headlong upon the fugitives and completely stripped them. Yet, strange inconsistency! the unfortunate soldiers thus mercilessly plundered, found that very evening a hospitable reception and generous treatment in the tents of their spoilers.

Koord Soldiers.

Hospitality appears to be the distinguishing virtue of nomadic races; the Koord carries it to its utmost pitch. The stranger and the traveller, whatever be his religion or nation, always meets with a hearty and joyous welcome, and an inviolable asylum in the first tent at which he chooses to alight. There is no end to the civilities and attentions bestowed on him. New milk is presented to him by the women on his arrival; they wash his feet with their own hands; instal him in the place of honour; and when he has rested a little they set a small repast before him, to stay his appetite till the family meal of which he is to partake is ready.

The safest plan for a traveller, especially a European, who wishes to traverse the Koord countries in every direction, would be to travel alone, without escort, from village to village, trusting at each to his host for the time being to pass him on to the next.

Among the Koords as among the Bedouins, the whole burden of domestic labours devolves upon the women: it is their business to milk the flocks, to perform all the operations of the dairy, to saddle the horses, set up the tents,

and so forth. If we add to these rude tasks, the more feminine ones of spinning, weaving, sewing, and cooking, with the various episodes of love and marriage, it will appear that the Koord females have their hands quite full enough of employment. Nevertheless, this does not prevent them from addicting themselves to other occupations of a more masculine character; a great number of them are practised from their infancy to the use of the lance and of fire-arms; and they are, with scarcely an exception, accomplished proficients in horsemanship.

We find associated with the Koords, small bodies of the Yezidis, speaking the same language as the former, and always occurring in isolated groups of some eight or ten families. Though there is a manifest difference both physical and moral, between the Koords and the Yezidis, still there are some points of resemblance between them: the latter have borrowed from the former, among whom they live, all those particulars in which the usages of the two races are alike.

Beyond Mardin (the ancient Mardes), between Nizibin (or Nizibis) and Moussoul (the ancient Nineveh), lies the country called Sindjar from the ancient name of the city of Singare, famous in history for the sanguinary wars waged by Sapor, king of Persia, against Constantius, emperor of Byzantium. A mountain named Sindjasdagh intersects the plain of Mesopotamia (the modern province of Djezereh), south of Mardin. This country abounding in pasturages and fruits of all kinds, is the abode of the main stock of the Yezidis, and here they are said to number 200,000 souls. Their villages are generally distinguished by the tombs, which are built in the form of a fluted cone or pyramid, standing upon a quadrangular base, but often with a circular pediment, and rising to a height of from ten to thirty feet. This form, as well as other things, is said to have been adopted to propitiate the devil; but it appears rather to be a Sabæan relic, and of great antiquity, just as the obelisk is supposed to have sprung from the representation of a flame of fire.

They are supposed to be the descendants of the ancient Mardians whom Arsaces, king of Persia, transported into Mesopotamia, and who gave their name to the city now called Mardin. Strabo, Arian, and Pliny, mention the Mardians as an indomitable race of men belonging to a Persian sect who worshipped Ahrimanes, the Evil Principle. The name of Izedis (the more correct orthography) appears to be derived from Ized Ferfer, one of the attendants, according to the Parsis, upon the evil spirit; and the emblem of this spirit may be recognised in the rudely-sculptured idol accompanying the serpent on the gateway of their chief temple, which Mr. Ainsworth visited at Sheikh Adi. Major Rawlinson notices a nearly similar name as being formerly in use, and refers to a letter from Heraclius to the senate, to be found in Theophanes, wherein mention is made of a position in Adiabene, called Jesdem: this Major Rawlinson with great probability considers as a settlement of Izedis.

But there is another theory respecting this singular tribe, according to which they are possibly of Jewish origin. Major Rawlinson, and after him Dr. Grant, have brought a very imposing mass of facts and arguments to bear on this hypothesis. Circumcision and the passover, or a sacrificial

festival allied to the passover in time and circumstances, are among the first points that tend to identify the Izedis with the Jews. To this has been added the still more direct testimony of ancient Syrian authors; such is the work consulted by Dr. Grant, in the possession of Mar Shimon, a book written A.D. 1253, and containing the statement that the Izedis are of Hebrew descent.

It is the Mohammedans, the bitter enemies of these tribes, who have given them the name of Yezidis, saying that they were so called from Yezid, the second of the Ommiade Kaliphs, and thus making them a sect of the Shiites, or worshippers of Ali. They assert that they do not eat lettuces, because the Khalif was killed in a garden of those vegetables. The Turks in particular look with such abhorrence upon the Yezidis, that the greatest insult they can offer an enemy is to call him by that hated name—a name synonymous among them with all that is treacherous and infamous. It is a received opinion among the lower order of Turks, that at the day of judgment the Jews are to ride to hell on the shoulders of the Yezidis.

The Yezidis are not slow to discharge the debt of hatred to the Mooslems, and whenever they can dispatch a follower of Mohammed without danger to themselves, they cut his throat, not only without pity, but even with pleasure. The act is, in their eyes, the most meritorious they can perform; whilst on the other hand, the Mohammedan is taught to expect the heavenly crown of martyrdom if he fall by the hand of a Yezidi. Hence it has been the practice from time immemorial, for the governors of Diarbekr, Moossool, and Mardin, to choose their executioners from among the Yezidis, so that the martyr's hopes may console the victim for the loss of life.

The whole people would offer themselves *en masse* to fill the office of executioner, and would eagerly contend for the honour, were not their ardour kept under vigilant control by their chief. A new executioner is chosen every six months: the individual who vacates an office esteemed so honourable and so holy, returns to the bosom of private life, secure of the veneration of his brethren: every one is eager to see him, to touch him, and, if a few spots of Mooslem gore remain on his clothes, the pieces so marked are cut into stripes, which are distributed as precious relics among the people.

When a Yezidi dies by the hand of a Turk, and has not been avenged, the funeral, which is usually accompanied with rejoicings, takes place silently and without display. The nearest kindred of the deceased shave their beards in token of dishonour, and do not suffer it to grow again till vengeance has been accomplished.

The religion of the Yezidis is doubtless founded on that of their Mardian ancestors: our knowledge of their doctrines and rites is derived wholly from the reports of their Christian and Mooslem neighbours, for they themselves preserve the most mysterious silence on the subject. It must be borne in mind, that information derived from so questionable a source, is to be received with great caution. With this proviso we shall relate what the best informed travellers have collected respecting this singular people.

The Syrians distinguish the Yezidis into several classes, such as the *shemsies* (worshippers of the sun), the *sheytanies* (satanists), and the *cathelees* (cut throats). The shemsies, they say, are the scattered descendants of the

ancient Guebres, whose deity was the principle of fire, and who worshipped the sun as the great source of light and heat: they are by no means numerous in Syria. But in all probability these distinctions are unfounded, for all the Yezidis appear to have one common creed, a traditional version, apparently, of the old Magian doctrines, mingled with divers extravagant fables. They recognise a good and an evil principle; but so greatly does the power of the latter preponderate, that the good principle is reduced to a state of impotence, and it is useless to invoke its aid. One must never irritate, nay, not so much as name, the devil or the evil principle, but speak of him as *the being without name, the great peacock of the angels.* So punctilious are they in this respect, that they will never call a river, for example, by its common name, *shat*, because that occurs in *sheitan*, a devil. If you argue with them that God is more powerful than the devil, since the latter is unable to change his own miserable and suffering condition, they will make answer that the predominance of evil, the work of the devil, throughout all nature, is a proof of his supremacy; and that even though he were no more than the agent and executor of God's justice, still it would be expedient to propitiate him in order to escape torment in the world to come. Furthermore, the belief is almost universally prevalent among them, that ere long the devil will be restored to God's favour, without, for all that, losing any part of his authority and his malign influence. They have also, according to Mr. Ainsworth, a remnant of Sabæanism; they bow in adoration before the rays of the rising sun, when they strike on a wall or other object near them; and they will not blow out a candle with their breath, or spit in the fire, lest they should defile the sacred element.

The Yezidis venerate Moses, Mohammed, and above all our Saviour and the Christian saints. "God," they say "has distinguished all these holy personages from the common herd of mankind; we must reverence them that we may obtain their protection in time of need." There is a sort of eclecticism in their principles, that leads them to borrow from and imitate all the religions in the world. There is nothing exclusive in their doctrines; on the contrary, in the hope of obtaining the good things of the life to come, they, like the Tatars, put themselves in a manner under the protection of all systems of worship, and all those individuals whom they believe to be potent in the realms of spirits. They practise the right of baptism, make the sign of the cross, so emblematic of Christianity in the East, and put off their shoes and kiss the threshold when they enter a Christian church. There are some Christian monasteries in Djezereh, and the Yezidis never pass before one of these without stopping there in pious meditation.

If a Yezidi dreams of a Christian convent during his illness, he makes it a point, when his health is re-established, to go on a pilgrimage to that convent, and return thanks to the patron saint for his recovery. "I saw at Malattia," says B. Poujoulat, "a Yezidi, who had journeyed fifty leagues on foot the year preceding, merely to kiss the threshold of a Catholic hermitage." But they have not the same reliance on the influence of the Mussulman santons. In matters of religion the opinions of the Yezidis are almost always diametrically opposite to those of the Turks. Wine, for

instance, being forbidden by the Koran, the Yezidis hold that liquor in high estimation; they drink it, carefully holding the cup with both hands, in the sacramental manner of the East, and if they chance to spill a few drops, they religiously gather up the earth that has imbibed them, and carry it to a secret place, where it can never be trodden under foot by man.

The Yezidis are divided into two castes, the *white* and the *black;* the latter (*Kara Yezidis*) are the sacerdotal class; they have their own peculiar rules of conduct, and are held in great reverence by the others. A black Yezidi is easily recognised by the form and the invariably dark hue of his garments, and by his very high head-dress, a sort of plaited *kaook*, usually black and yellow. The members of this class make a show of being rigorously austere in their principles and practices, and give themselves out for voluntary paupers or *fakirs*, whom the whites are bound to provide for. The fakir presides at funeral ceremonies; he places the dead man erect, slaps him on the right cheek with the palm of his hand, and says to him, *Béshek*, "Go to Paradise!" The only secular occupation to which the Kara Yezidis will condescend, is the care of cattle; they affect not to know how to use any kind of weapon, and to abhor the sight of blood. To such a pitch do they carry this prejudice, that they will not even kill a fowl, but the whites must do it for them. Upon the death of one of them all the Yezidis, black and white, assemble and pass the night in singing, dancing, and all sorts of noisy revelry, to celebrate the passage of the blessed mortal from star to star, to the place of his eternal rest. His soul tarries successively in all the stars and planets it meets on its way, undergoing still higher and higher degrees of purification in each, till at last it shines with a perfect lustre.

It is at night also that the Yezidis adore *the being without name*, with songs and dances to the accompaniment of the tambourine or *derbeke*. The darker the night the more propitious it is to their worship. The *great peacock of the angels* has his seat in the midst of their satanic revels, and when he is perfectly satisfied with the honours paid him, he testifies his approbation by a piercing yell that echoes fearfully through the mountains; all cast themselves prostrate at the sound, with their faces to the earth; the derbekes vibrate and resound without the touch of mortal hand; for *the being without name* agitates them with his mighty breath. The *Sheyle*, or grand pontiff, who presides at these festivals, always has his face concealed with a black veil with two holes for the eyes. He appears to exercise an extraordinary ascendancy over the other Yezidis, who are bound, as the Syrians state, to obey all his commands implicitly, without regard to obstacles or dangers of any kind whatever. The Sheyle wears a peculiar robe (*kabassi*), a close black tunic striped lengthwise with yellow bands, in imitation of forked flames. It has short and exceedingly wide sleeves, and an opening just large enough to pass the head through, trimmed with yellow. The first person who filled the office of Sheyle, having invoked the great peacock of the angels on an important occasion, for which he had prepared himself by long fasting, was suddenly covered from head to foot with glittering flames that issued from the ground, whilst a golden circle of intense lustre descended round his neck and threw a dazzling splendour over his

countenance. The *being without name* thus gave his worshipper a manifest proof of his affection and his power. It is in memory of this mysterious event that the pontiff's tunic is thus bordered with a yellow circle at the neck, and covered all over with imitative flames.

The grand festival in honour of the being without name is held annually on the 10th of August, and its celebration takes place with most pomp near a high mountain called Abdoul Azis, thirty leagues south-east of Mardin, whither the votaries flock with their wives and daughters from the remotest regions. At the foot of the mountain there is a cavern of unfathomable depth, reaching, as they suppose, down to the infernal dominions. Into this abyss they fling living goats and sheep, money, bread, fruit and clothes—their offerings to the king of darkness. After the wild rites we have described are ended, the flambeaux, it is said, are extinguished, and the frantic multitude rush into a grotto adjoining the cavern, where they give themselves up to the most diabolical excesses—excesses precisely the same as those popularly imputed to the inhabitants of the Anzeyry mountains north of Lebanon; nay, more—and this is an important fact—precisely the same as those slanderously imputed to the early Christians by the Pagans, and to the members of the reformed church by the Catholics of the sixteenth century.

Such is an abstract of what the northern Syrians and the people of Mesopotamia relate concerning the creed and usages of the Yezidis, their neighbours: but it must be borne in mind that opportunities for making personal observations among the latter are exceedingly rare, and that much error is probably mixed up with some truth in all the current accounts of their religious notions and ceremonies.

"Though I passed some weeks," says Perrier, "in a Yezidi village of the Hudjuk Boghas in the Taurus, in September 1839, the marked and rancorous antipathy mutually displayed between the people of the village and the Arab horsemen who accompanied me, put an insuperable bar to my investigations, and prevented me from verifying the assertions of the Syrians."

It is, no doubt, this intense and vivid hatred that perpetuates the murders committed by the *cathelees* or cut-throat Yezidis. The Turks have never let slip any opportunity that presented itself to them of oppressing or degrading the Yezidis; but the latter have constantly taken cruel vengeance upon the Turkish travellers or merchants who have been obliged to venture into their mountains. Before the establishment of Mohammed Ali's power in Syria, it was a common thing to find the bodies of Mussulmen murdered by the Yezidis in the mountains of Aintab and Killis; and it was always easy to distinguish, by means of a horrible mutilation, whether the victim had fallen by the hand of a common robber or by that of a catheli Yezidi. The assassians usually escaped with impunity, for it would have been difficult to detect them; they made it a practice to roam alone on horseback through the mountains, and they were very careful not to commit the crime in the neighbourhood of their own villages. The only system capable of diminishing the number of assassinations in the mountains was that adopted by Ibrahim Pacha, who made each sheikh and each village responsible for the acts committed in their own districts.

Invariably, says M. Perrier, did I encounter the same generous hospitality

among the Yezidis as among the Koords. Having occasion, in the month of October 1839, to make a second tour through several of their villages and camps in the mountains of Daluc-Baba, near Aintab, I was accompanied only by two mounted Turcomans. Though military contributions of every kind had been levied from their villages with unsparing rigour, the moment I appeared in their tents they hastened to set before me warm milk, and an ample repast of *shaourmeh*, that is, roast mutton basted with *yaoort* or sour milk, and the women instantly prepared for me cakes of unleavened bread, baked on an iron plate over a quick fire of brushwood. As soon as my host discovered, notwithstanding my Turkish name of Othman Aga, that I was not an Osmanlee but a Frank, he burst out into the noisiest demonstrations of joy, and quite overwhelmed me with assiduous attentions, all the while bewailing my hard lot, to be compelled to live among *the damned Mussulmans*. Whenever I quitted the village, he always escorted me for several hours on my way, to point out the best road and warn me against localities he considered dangerous. If he himself or one of his family was labouring under any malady, he would give me no rest till I had given him something for a cure. All protestations on my part that I was ignorant of medicine, would only have grieved without convincing him; on the other hand, he always went away happy and grateful when he had received some pretended remedy, which, of course, I took care should be perfectly innocent.

"I have been much among the Izedis," says Mr. Ainsworth,* "in various parts of the mountains and plains, and have found them to be possessed of many good points, among which I may enumerate candour, integrity, religious toleration, courage, industry, cleanliness, domestic affection, civility, and manly pride. They have also many bad points, partly, however, accessory to their position; a love of war and rebellion, fierceness towards strangers, and a proneness to plunder and predatory exploits, but not to petty larcenies." Kinneir says they are possessed of noble and generous principles; Rich calls them lively, brave, hospitable, and good-humoured; and Dr. Grant speaks of them as "friendly towards the professors of Christianity."

Yezidi Man and Woman.

As a race of men they are mostly tall, slim and well made; their bones large and their features spare, but marked with much earnestness and decision. The brows advance over the eye, the forehead is high but retreating, the nose prominent, the lips moderate.

* Travels in Asia Minor, &c.

CHAPTER V.

Quarantine—The Antonine Way—The Nahr-el-Kelb and its Grotto—Syrian Rivers.

We left our German friends on their way to the Nahr-el-Kelb, and near the Mosque of St. George. The vicinity of the latter to the spot where the Egyptians established the lazaretto, brings under our notice the quarantine as it existed in Syria, when the country was under the sway of Mohammed Ali.

Much gratuitous praise has been bestowed on Mohammed Ali by a portion of the European press, for his having established the quarantine system in his dominions—a bold step, it was said, in his grand march towards western civilisation. The expression of this approbation and sympathy was probably the chief thing sought to be secured by the cunning old man; nor have his sanatory reforms been the only measures adopted by him for the express purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of western sages and politicians. The quarantine system, as it existed in Syria under his sway, was perfectly ineffective, except as a means of vexation and extortion; there was scarcely any conceivable abuse of which it did not furnish striking examples: but the government and its officers found "it worked well" towards putting money in their pockets, and as an instrument of annoyance to Turkey, against which country its provisions were enforced with extraordinary severity. As if to render the absurdities and mischiefs of the system the more glaring, inland cordons were formed in the most arbitrary and capricious manner,—things which are in all countries most difficult to establish, but peculiarly so in Turkey, where nobody understands or cares about them; and where the religious prejudices of the people, and of the very functionaries of the system, operate to render them nugatory. It is notorious that the highest officers of the government were in the habit of amusing themselves by visiting and carousing with persons detained in the lazaret, going in and out without any the slightest precaution; and if the principal officers thus violated the laws and intentions of the quarantine, what was to be expected of the meaner subordinates? To accept a bribe, under any circumstances, is but a part of the most ordinary Oriental usages; to accept a bribe for allowing the revenue to be defrauded is the practice of every day and of every officer; and to accept a bribe for permitting the quarantine to be broken—when the officer himself is convinced that to keep the quarantine is of no earthly avail—is an offence of which a Mussulman would make very light.

The doctrine of fatalism is enough of itself to make the Mooslems indifferent to sanatory precautions; but besides this, it is an article of their belief, that all who die of the plague, like those who fall in battle, are predestined to dwell with the houris in paradise. Hence, when there were cases of plague in the lazaret, the inmates were obliged to invert the intended order of things,

and to keep watch over their guardians, in order to avoid being compromised by them, and rendered liable to more lengthened confinement. On many occasions the government did not scruple to infringe the rules itself had established; during its last war against Turkey, it frequently landed on various parts of the coast, and without quarantine, troops arriving from Alexandria, when the plague was raging in that city.

"The plague had broken out at Jaffa when I was in Palestine,* and orders were issued to prevent travellers coming from Jaffa entering into any other town; but how?—what security could be given? There are no passports; the traveller is asked (if he happens to be stopped at all) from whence he comes; of course, he states from any place but the place in quarantine; nobody knows—how should they know the direction travellers take? If the quarantine be tolerably strict, and the plague happens to be at the south, the traveller takes care to enter by the northern, eastern, or western road. If the plague is at Jaffa, he takes care to declare he comes from Beyroot, or Damascus, or Mount Lebanon. While I was at Beyroot the plague was at Jerusalem, yet every day I saw travellers arrive from Jerusalem, and they entered the town without impediment or difficulty. In many instances they entered by the Jerusalem road; and then, instead of saying they had come from Jerusalem, they declared they had only travelled from Tyre, or Sidon, or Nablous, or any other place in which the plague had not appeared. If any unpractised European chose to expose himself to the lazaret by avowing that he had come from the Holy City, he would only get laughed at for his want of sagacity.

"The regulations as to persons coming by sea were as severe as those against land-travellers were slack and useless. For example: at the time when the plague was raging at Jaffa and Jerusalem, persons arrived from those places every day, and entered the city without any sort of difficulty; but vessels arriving from places in which there was no plague at all, were subjected to the most rigid quarantine. I saw the case of an arrival from Damietta with a clean bill of health, when the passengers were all sent out into the lazaret, in which the plague was raging, and in which many persons had perished who had arrived in good health from places in which there was no plague; and this at a moment when there was not the slightest difficulty in coming from places in which the plague was destroying multitudes. A letter was shown to me from the Russian vice-consul at Acre, who had come by sea from a part of Egypt free from plague, and yet was sent into the lazaret, where he writes, that three corpses of persons who died of plague were lying next to his own apartment, in a putrid state, and that he could neither obtain their removal nor his own."

Most readers are aware of the controversy still pending as to the contagious or non-contagious nature of the plague. Without involving ourselves in the intricacies of that much-vexed question, may we not venture to doubt the utility of introducing lazarets and quarantines into places, every one of which is a perpetual hot-bed of disease? In most of the cities all offensive matters are allowed to accumulate; the rankest animal and vegetable substances

* Dr. Bowring's Report.

putrefy in the most populous places; everything is left but what the wandering dogs devour, or the rains carry away, or the hot sun dries up, or the atmospheric action destroys. It seldom happens that any steps are taken for cleaning the streets, or for the removal of any kind of filth. There are no drains, no dung carts, no scavengers: in fine, it would hardly seem that noses and lungs have the same susceptibility in the East as in the West.

In Damascus, the capital of Syria, there are deep pits in some of the principal streets, which are the recipients of every sort of foul deposit; and some of them are so deep, and occupy so much of the whole width, that they can hardly be passed without danger.

In spite of the unphilosophical assumption to the contrary, it appears certain that the plague is frequently of spontaneous growth. If, besides this, it is sometimes propagated by contagion, what more likely to lead to such a result than crowding human beings together in filthy noisome dens, where the healthy are nursed into a predisposition to disease, and where pestilential virus is fomented up to the force of high-pressure steam? If the doctrine of the ultra-contagionists be true—and it is shared by the whole Levantine population—Dame Partlett will sooner sweep back the Atlantic with her broom, than any fence of man's device will bar out the incursions of the subtle plague fiend. "I have heard," says Dr. Bowring, "the outbreaks of the plague attributed to the pulling of a bell-rope, which had been allowed to remain in a house where plague cases had occurred many years before; to the signing of a document with a pen which had come from an infected house; to a thread which had been bought in a Turkish bazaar, used for mending a sheet; to a feather in a bed from a fowl which had escaped from the Mohammedan quarter. It is perfectly obvious, that if you start by assuming that the plague *must* have been communicated, nothing is more easy than to establish the whole series of links of communication from any one part of the world to another. But what is to be said against demonstrable proof, that Europe is inundated with plague-infected articles? The cotton and other commodities of the East are gathered and packed in plague countries; they served as couches and beds to the sick and dying of the plague; they are brought by vessels, large portions of whose crews are frequently carried away by plague; and this cotton and other commodities circulate through every manufacturing town and village in the empire, frequently without any precaution whatever. Nor has it been averred, when precautions have been taken, that any persons employed in unpacking, or manipulating these Oriental products, have, in any one instance, been attacked by the plague. It was declared to me, by medical men in the East, that they had frequently occasion to observe that the houses of commodious construction protected the inhabitants from plague, while in the mean and dirty huts, occupied by the same race of people, the mortality was great. A French physician assured me, that during the Egyptian expedition, whenever the French troops removed with their plague patients from the infected towns or cities, the progress of the malady was arrested."

So much for the quarantine. We proceed now on our excursion:—After crossing the river of Beyroot by the Roman bridge, the road con-

tinues for some distance among mulberry and orange gardens; and then a pleasant ride along the sandy beech brings you to the foot of the promontory called Ras Nahr-el-Kelb (that is, the cape of the Dog River), about ten miles from Beyroot. Close to the sea are several spacious shallow tanks, hewn in the rocks, which have been used for obtaining salt by evaporating sea-water. The place is called *El Melaha*, from the Arabic word *melh*, "salt;" this is a very common name of places wherever the Arab has had dominion, and is probably the same of which a slightly modified form occurs in that of Malaga in Spain.

Here Lebanon suddenly again approaches the sea, on which the bluff rock abuts precipitously, so as to have rendered it necessary to cut out a road

The Antonine Way.

round its side for a length of about a thousand yards. The width of this causeway averages about six or eight feet, and its surface is in the form of shallow steps, forming, in its present rugged and broken state, rather a precarious path for horses. The work of cutting this road was one of no great labour; and Burckhardt thinks that, as an engineering achievement, it hardly deserved the pompous inscription on the rock just over the sea at the embouchure of the river, which sets forth that the road was made by the Emperor Antoninus. But the pass was of incalculable importance in a military point of view, for elsewhere all direct communication between the plain of Beyroot and the regions to the north is wholly impracticable. This it is, no doubt, that made countless other warriors besides Antoninus, from Sesostris down to the Emir Beshir, desirous of attaching some record of their renown to the walls of this Syrian Thermopylæ. At various points on the face of

the rock there are sculptured figures and inscriptions, evidently of great antiquity, and of different periods: they are supposed to commemorate certain events in Egyptian, Assyrian, and Phrygian history, and it is conjectured that one of them, which contains the hieroglyphic name of Rameses, may be one of those memorials of conquest which were set up by Sesostris.

Antonine Way.—Rock Sculptures.

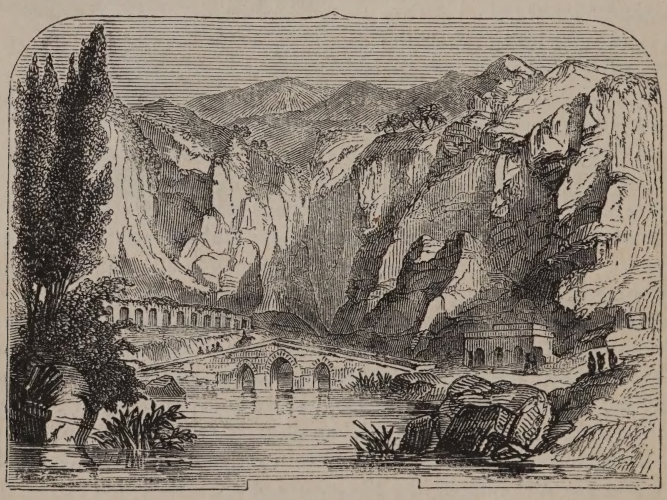
Near the northern extremity of the road stands a mass of rock hewn into the form of a pedestal, which the natives imagine supported the figure of a huge dog, whence the river took its name; and they point to a large black rock, nearly covered by the sea, as this canine statue, which had fallen from the cliff above. The animal's mouth was wide open, and when the wind was high, strange musical howlings used to escape from its marble throat. The affrighted Arab apprehended he knew what would be fatal influence upon the land from those unearthly strains; and in order to break the enchantment, the people of the country hurled the statue from its base into the sea, where it now lies on its back, but wanting its head, which had been previously struck off and carried to Venice, as Maundrell tells us. Whether or not there be any truth in the tradition that such a statue once existed, it is a curious coincidence that the river was called Lycus (Wolf River) by the Greeks and Romans. Some have fancied that the peculiar rushing sound of the rapid waters, sharply reverberated by the perpendicular cliffs around, so as to have some resemblance to the baying of wolves or wild dogs, was the cause of the river's similarity of name among different nations.

At the northern side of the promontory, the rocks impending over the narrow way recede somewhat, and the road gradually descends into a singular ravine, through which the Dog River finds its way to the sea. On arriving at this point, the traveller looks directly down on the broad mirrored surface of the river; whilst the mountain crags in the background are so thickly set in parallel ranges like the scenes of a theatre, that it is impossible to discover the place whence the waters make their approach. The walls of the ravine are on all sides perpendicular, and form an amphitheatre, pierced only on one side by a comparatively very narrow opening, through which the eye follows the rush of the river to the sea. In some places the long continued action of the mountain-floods has so split the smooth rocky walls as to give them the appearance of colossal columns ranged closely side by side.

The whole amphitheatre suggests the idea of an immense cathedral, the dome of which has perished, leaving only the naked walls, through which you look up to the sky. Here and there the walls are clothed with long lithe water-plants or moss, which offer further materials for busy fancy to fashion into an endless variety of shapes.

In some places the river fills the whole bed of the ravine up to the foot of the rock; in others, it leaves a narrow margin overgrown with trees, sugar-canes, and creepers, that form a thick green vault over the banks, and sometimes over the whole bed of the stream. A ruined khan stands on the rock by the water side, opposite a light bridge with pointed arches, about three hundred paces from the sea. On the northern bank there is an aqueduct of about twenty arches, the waters of which still suffice to turn a mill. That bank is ascended by a rocky staircase, perhaps even more difficult to traverse than the road we have already described. The last legate of the Pope to the Maronites met with his death in consequence of a false step made by his horse on that fearful track.

The Nahr-el-Kelb forms the natural boundary to the south of that district of Lebanon called the Kesrouan (the Castravan of the Crusaders), the peculiar home of the Maronite population. Postponing for the present our intention of exploring this singular and interesting region, let us now turn aside up stream with our countrymen Mr. Hunter and Major Napier. The former says:—



Mouth of the Nahr-el-Kelb.

"A narrow bridle-path by the side of the aqueduct enabled us to penetrate nearly a mile higher up the stream; but immediately afterwards its course was so completely inclosed as to preclude our further progress. We ascended the heights. It was a noble sight to look down upon that impetuous

current, dashing and eddying over its rocky bed, and hemmed in with mountains of the most gigantic proportions.

"We were anxious to discover, if possible, a famed cavern said to exist midway to the source of the river. After wandering for many a league, and when our horses were beginning to tire with the severe ascents, we at length arrived at a mountain hamlet, where Georgius found a peasant who said he could conduct us to the spot we were in search of. His first information was, that we must dismount, as the route was difficult, even on foot. And true it was; for we shortly commenced a continuous descent more suited for goats than men. But the old mountaineer, who was our guide, continued steadily on his way, making nothing of obstacles; and the descent, under his example, was merrily passed, and little thought of. In another hour we stood again by the dark waters of the river, now much decreased in size. An amphitheatre of mountains environed us on every side. The mouth of the cavern was seen a little above the bank we were upon. At its entrance were a few stunted trees, whilst from another aperture gushed a limpid stream, which fell into the river below in a series of wild cascades. The spot was picturesque, but too wild and dreary to induce perfectly pleasurable emotions. In many points it reminded me of Walter Scott's description of the Goblin Cave in the 'Lady of the Lake' (Canto iii.)—

'It was a strange and wild retreat
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell upon the mountain's crest
Yawned like a gash in warrior's breast:
Its trench had staid full many a rock,
Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock,
* * * *
And here in random ruin piled,
That frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.'

We had brought wax torches, but at the moment of need found that the flint and steel were lost! The Major's expedient on this occasion was worthy of his fame as a ranger of the jungle. He tore some cotton into shreds, and, after one or two efforts, succeeded in lighting it at the flash of his pistol; then, by blowing it in a handful of leaves, it got a-blaze.

"We entered the vasty halls of the cavern, when our guide begged of us to proceed with caution; he evidently was as much at a loss as ourselves. Proceeding onwards, we saw huge bats hanging in thick festoons upon the chalky roof; scared by our lights, they fluttered their skinny wings, uttering shrill and chirruping cries, which were repeated from a far extent around. We had proceeded about a hundred yards, when rocks a few feet in height obstructed our further progress. A cold current of air rushed up from the other side; and, upon stretching out our lights, we saw an abyss, apparently most profound, extending into the interior of the mountain. We threw over a piece of rock, and heard it boom from side to side, until at length it splashed in the water. Another gallery led from this to the left, along

which we proceeded, but, as might be presumed, looking well to our ways. Soon we turned again by a high-domed passage, in a direction outwards from the cavern. A truly beautiful sight now presented itself. We first saw in the distance a bright light, breaking through a low but broad crevice in the mountain; and, upon a nearer approach, found that a vast sheet of water lay extended between us and the day: the subdued reflection upon its surface—the dark recesses surrounding it—with its rippling exit over sedge and mosses, made it appear such as mythological poetry has painted the home of a Naïad or a river god. We ultimately found this to be the stream which discharged itself near where we entered the cavern."

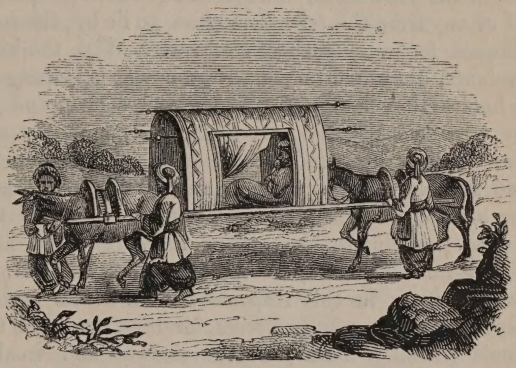
According to Poujoulat it is popularly believed in Syria that the waters of the Nahr-el-Kelb are identical with those of the river Barrada, which waters Damascus! The latter flowing south-eastwards of the city, is lost in swamp. Here, then, we have one river lost to sight, and another bursting at once in full volume from the bowels of the earth: these are data quite sufficient for the imagination of an Arab to found a theory upon, although more than a hundred miles of mountain-land are interposed between the two points in question. What a comfort it is to be able thus to account for everything! How many a theorist in Europe might well envy this happy indifference to the importunities of stubborn fact! Subterraneous streams are common in Syria, as in many other limestone regions, and there is no end to the tales related of them by the natives. As Lamartine was riding in Antilebanon, an Arab guide, who was trudging by his side, pointed out to him a distant lake, and told him the following story.

"Once upon a time, there was a herdsman who tended the she-camels of a village situated on the borders of yonder lake, in a lonely tract of this lofty mountain. One day, when watering the herd, he perceived that the water of the lake escaped by a subterranean issue, and this he closed up with a large stone, but let his staff fall in while doing so. Some time after this, a river dried up in a province of Persia. The Sultan, seeing his dominions threatened with famine for want of water to irrigate the land, consulted the sages of his empire, and, in accordance with their advice, sent emissaries into all the neighbouring realms to discover how the source of his river had been diverted or dried up. These envoys carried with them the herdsman's staff, which had been hurried away by the torrent: when they arrived in Damascus the herdsman happened to be there, and, recognising his own staff, he perceived that his lake was the source of the lost river, and that the wealth and the existence of a whole people were in his hands. 'What will the Sultan do for the man who will restore him his lost river?' said he to the envoys. 'He will give him,' they replied, 'his daughter and the half of his kingdom.' 'Go in peace, then,' rejoined the herdsman; 'and before you reach home, the river shall again water Persia, and rejoice the heart of the Sultan.' Then going up the mountain, he removed the great stone; the waters returned to their old course, and once more filled the bed of the river. The Sultan sent fresh envoys with his daughter to the fortunate herdsman, and bestowed on him half his provinces.'

CHAPTER VI.

SOME PECULIARITIES OF EASTERN, AND MORE PARTICULARLY OF SYRIAN, TRAVEL.

TRAVELLING in Syria is always performed on the backs of mules or horses, except in the desert and its confines, where camels are employed. Wheel-carriages are unknown, and rarely is there even a cart to be seen in the whole country. When ladies, children, or aged persons make long journeys, they are accommodated with a litter, called a *tackterawan;* and this is also used, for the more state, by pashas and other great men. Sometimes the tacterawan assumes the form of a covered palanquin or sedan chair; but the bearers are horses or mules, not men; sometimes a pair of tilted crates are slung on the back of an animal, one on each side, and these are packed with the more "precious porcelain of human clay." On short trips ladies mount the saddle, which they sit astride; but the form both of the saddle and of their garments prevents any more exposure of the person, than the most discreet spinster in Europe would think perfectly decorous. The saddle used by females in the East is very long, and flat on the top, like a butcher's pad; and while the seat is fixed as far back as possible, the feet rest in the short stirrups that hang from the opposite extremity. The favourite pace is the amble: it is extremely easy, and a well-trained *rakhouan* (a horse that ambles) commands a high price: such animals will sometimes *run* eight or ten miles an hour in this manner.



A Tackterawan.

Travellers who have not their own horses generally prefer the sure-footed mules, to the hack horses that are let out for hire: but the obstinacy and perversity of the mule is a sore trial of the rider's patience. The horse, if he be in tolerable condition, may be trusted with safety on the worst roads, and his gentle and gallant spirit, hardiness and intelligence, endear him to the traveller as a true friend. Their powers of endurance are most remarkable. "An old flea-bitten gray horse, given me by the commodore," says Colonel Napier, "has, on more than one occasion, carried me for sixteen or eighteen hours at a stretch without food; and once I cantered him from Hebron to Jaffa, nearly fifty miles without pulling bit. At the end of such journeys,

Arab horses get only a few handfuls of barley, no bedding or grooming, and generally the saddle is never removed." An ordinary day's journey may be about twenty or five-and-twenty miles. Distances in the East are reckoned by hours; a place is said to be so many hours from another, each hour being equivalent on the average to two and three-quarters English statute miles, for horses or mules, and two and one-third for camels. Now and then the natives employ for short distances another measure, for which the learned have not yet determined the mathematical equivalent; if you ask them how far it is to such a place, they will answer it is so many pipes off; a very natural kind of language in a country where everybody smokes all day long.

The price paid by Dr. Robinson's party, on various excursions round Jerusalem in the year 1838, was fifteen or sixteen piastres* a day for each animal; or, if at any time the travellers chose to lie by, the half of this price only was to be paid for every such day of rest. With the keeping of the animals, or attendants, they had no concern, nor was anything paid extra for the men. The horses they had were slender and active, and also exceedingly hardy. They were fed usually only at night; commonly only on barley, or other grain, with straw, and occasionally, when there was a scanty herbage round the tent, they were suffered to crop it. Their gait is a fast walk—never a trot; for upon the mountains the state of the roads renders this for the most part impossible. They are sure-footed, and exceedingly sagacious in picking out their way among the rocks, and Dr. Robinson says, he found little difference in this respect between horses and mules. These remarks apply, of course, only to horses for hire, and not to the sleek and well-fed animals (usually mares) of the sheikhs and wealthy individuals; which, with equal hardiness, exhibit a wonderful degree of activity and fleetness.

The Baron von Taubenheim, first equerry to the King of Wurtemburg, made a long tour in Syria and the Desert in the year 1840, expressly for the purpose of procuring, for the royal stud, brood mares and stallions of the rarest excellence. His authority on all matters pertaining to horseflesh is not to be disputed. Let us hear, then, what he says, in a letter to a friend, on the *hired* horses of Syria.

"You know very well what an Anglomaniac I am; that no one so highly prizes as I do the fine free play of the shoulder and the splendid action of the English horse; but from henceforth I set the Arab horse above every other, and I can speak from experience of his extraordinary performances. I have journeyed all over Lebanon, Antilebanon, and part of the Desert, on a *hired* Arab mare, eighteen years old, and scarcely twelve and a half hands high, and I do not remember ever to have been so thankful to any horse for its good service as I was to this. You can have no conception of the character of the roads in Lebanon. It is an incessant clambering over rocks, in which the horse has often to mount or descend two or three feet at a step; the track is sometimes strewed with loose rolling stones, sometimes it runs jaggedly and unevenly along the verge of a precipice. Marshy places, too, are not unfrequent, through which the horse, sinking almost to its belly, has to labour for half an hour long; yet over such roads as these it goes on without flagging from six in the morning till eight in the evening; and I

* The piastre is not quite equal to 2½*d*.

can aver, that I could not in the very last quarter of an hour, discover the least abatement of strength or spirit in the animal I rode. For many days I never, in the most literal sense of the words, took hold of the reins. I had left two of my friends very ill at Beyroot, and made the journey in company only with a Georgian prince and H.; but the very day we set out, I also was attacked with illness; I had continual vomitings of bile, and laboured under a considerable degree of fever. To travel over Lebanon under such circumstances, sometimes with the weather intensely hot, sometimes through regions deep with snow, with a cattle-shed to lie in, but no straw for a bed, and with nothing to eat; all this I do assure you would furnish matter for ten sheets of description, such as would draw tears from any tender soul. I only mention it as explaining how it was that, with teeth chattering, I wrapped my hands up in my cloak and folded it close about me, and rode without bridle over those frightful roads, and even galloped for hours over rolling stones, my horse all the while carrying me with perfect safety, and behaving capitally.

"One day we had lost our way, and I was very much afraid we should have to pass the night in the open air, which would have been very disagreeable to me, with the fever I had, and without a cloak, for we had galloped on before the baggage horses, which was the cause of our getting out of the right track. At last, about nine in the evening, we discovered a light far down beneath us, but parted from us by a monstrous abyss, and I had not the courage to dismount and try to creep down the steep cliff in the darkness. Such, however, was my confidence in my horse, that I turned him towards the descent, and left him to his own guidance. At first he slided down so violently, that I expected every moment I should have my neck broken; but in half an hour I was safely reposing in the khan. The cleverness with which these animals pick their way—the unequal steps they always make, just as they see a spot that appears fit for their tread, is truly wonderful. At first it annoyed me that my horse never chose the smooth places, but always the ruts and holes, to set his foot on: I tried even to break him of this habit; but I soon perceived that he acted very sagaciously in avoiding the smooth places, in which he was liable to slide, while the inequalities he was so fond of enabled him to make his foothold perfectly good. I know that in my own country I shall, from vanity, again seek me out a six foot high English horse, as more accordant with my own seven foot stature; but this, too, I know, that I consider the Arab horse, such as he is in his own country, as capable of doing better service than the English. For the day of battle I should perhaps make choice of an English hunter, trained in our own manner; but for a whole campaign, give me one Arab in preference to two English horses." (Letter in Hackländer, vol. ii.)

When a horse or a mule stumbles or otherwise misbehaves, the Arabs take another way of intimating their displeasure than by blows. They curse the offending animal and all its seed, breed, and generation; call it a *pig* and an *infidel*, and threaten to "spit on its beard."

Perils by flood as well as by field await the Syrian wayfarer. Many brooks and rivers must be forded, and this is often an exploit of great danger in the spring season, when the volume of the waters has been swollen

by the winter rains and by the melted snows, and every rill, and every channel that lay dry and stony in summer, becomes a foaming torrent. Some few bridges there are, no doubt, but a singular peculiarity of the country often renders these useless, even when they are not ruinous. So prone are the rivers of Syria to change their beds, that one is not unfrequently obliged to wade through them, whilst the bridges by which they were formerly crossed are seen standing at some distance from them on the dry ground.*

A small river called El Zucka, which is very shallow in summer, falls into the sea south of the ruins of Cæsarea. Major Skinner's Adventures, when he crossed it in the month of March, offer an interesting illustration of this part of our subject.

"I attempted," he says, "to cross the river where, spreading over the sands, it seemed to grow shallow as it joined with the sea. When I reached the middle of it, however, I was disappointed; it was a swimming depth, and the surf broke fairly over my horse, who, growing frightened, backed into it, and put me in a dilemma that I was relieved from only by the waves breaking upon his flanks, and flogging him back to shore again. I had started alone upon the experiment, and, having got well drenched for my pains, was forced to make a toilet on the green banks of the stream, at some distance from the coast, whither we had sauntered in hopes of being able to find a ford. The water was, however, still too deep and rapid; we were now fairly launched in pursuit of adventures, for not one of my party knew any other road than that along the sands, which would have brought us into Jaffa before dark.

"We continued along the banks of the river, occasionally making an attempt to stem the current, which always frustrated us, till in despair, about four o'clock, we yielded to fate, that seemed to have determined that we were not to pass the Zucka, nor indeed, without succour, to advance a step further. The country was under water as far as I could see. A loaf of bread and some hard eggs still remained in the convent sack, and, in the last green spot within sight, we resolved to await the dawn of another day. A large and shady tree was above us; and below, between green shelving banks, ran the river. The clouds promised a rainy night, and with very rueful faces, having finished the last egg in the sack, we endeavoured to prepare for it; when, suddenly starting from a little thicket behind us, appeared a single Arab, carrying a spear in his hand, and in his girdle a hatchet. He was coal black, and of a most formidable height.

"'Peace be to you!' said he, striding into the midst of our little circle, and then pausing, as if doubtful whether we merited such a salutation. 'Upon you also be peace! Whence come you?' replied my spokesman 'From there,' continued the Arab, pointing in a careless manner with his chin, which seemed to say, 'That's enough for you to know;' and sitting down at my feet, he fixed his eyes for some moments upon me.

"Breaking silence at length, he began a cross-examination of Hassan in a blunt tone, that showed, in his own estimation at any rate, he was the greatest man of the party. 'What do you do with that Frank?' said he to

* Blondel, Deux Ans en Syrie, Paris, 1840.

Hassan. 'He is my master,' was the reply; 'what should I do with him?' 'He is an infidel?' 'What do I know? He is an Englishman.' 'God is merciful. Is he a fool or a dervish, that he sits here at the close of day? Where is he going?' 'Inshallah, to Jerusalem,' answered Hassan; and if you can show us a ford over the river, you shall be well rewarded; and that will be more to the purpose than asking questions here.' 'Wullah, you say well,' cried the Arab; 'I came across the river this morning. Let me see what I shall have, and in an hour I'll show the ford.'

"The bargain was soon struck; for I was so pleased to escape from the necessity of lodging where he had found me, that I promised him a sum beyond his hopes. 'Emchi,' said he, the moment he heard it, 'let us be gone;' and, instantly mounting, we prepared to follow him. But, too much delighted with his good fortune, our guide was anxious to have it at once in possession, and, turning suddenly, demanded payment before he set out. I was not in a humour for dispute, and, in spite of the entreaties of the Christian and the doubts of Hassan, I paid him all without condition. He now strode away without uttering a syllable, or deigning to satisfy our curiosity about the part of the river to which he meant to lead us.

"In an hour, however, true to his word, he brought us to it. There was a small island in the midst of the stream, past which it ran at a great rate, and the Arab declared the water was much more rapid and higher than in the morning. I saw but little chance of reaching the other side, and was not over pleased to perceive our sulky leader seat himself by the bank, and, lighting his pipe, resign himself quietly to smoke. 'You may go over if you like,' said he, when I addressed him, 'but I don't think you'll reach the other side. God is merciful, and we shall see!' 'You promised to take us over,' was the answer from my side, 'and an Arab never fails in his word.' 'God forbid!' he continued; 'but I cannot swim across, and have no horse.'

"I proposed that he should ride mine, and try the ford, and we would wait until he came back. He at once agreed, and, leaping upon him, rode into the stream. The current, however, was too strong; the horse was swept away, and the Arab, being thrown off, had some difficulty to regain the bank. He exerted himself to recover the horse, who landed safely a little lower down; and, bringing him up to me, he put the money that I had given to him into my hand, saying, with the same blunt manner, 'I can't take you across; there is your money.' I urged him to keep it, as he had accomplished for us all he could do. He was nevertheless positive, counted out the piastres, and, in placing the last in my hand, 'There,' said he, 'an Arab never fails in his word. You cannot cross to-night. If you like to follow me, I'll show you where you may rest;' then, without waiting for an answer, he walked away. I was so delighted with the unexpected change in the character of this man, who was one of the most forbidding looking fellows I ever saw, that I willingly followed him, resolved to mistrust an Arab no more."

Frank travellers are not always so fortunate in their experience of Arab good faith; not but that the nomade Arab has a strong sense of the sacredness of his plighted word; but, on the other hand, his greediness of gain is

insatiable, and wages vehement and too often successful war against his better feelings. Our shrewd countryman, however, touched the right key when he appealed to the national spirit and the honour of his respectable friend. Vanity is one of the strongest principles of the Arab character; and vanity is oftener, perhaps, the source of virtuous actions than is commonly supposed. But philosophise upon the matter as we may, the fact here recorded remains not the less marvellous. A man may wander far and wide through the East, yet never have to reckon, amidst all the wonders he beholds, the astounding phenomenon of the voluntary surrender by an Arab of the money he has once fairly clutched.

Baffled in his first attempt to cross the Zucka, Major Skinner passed the night in an encampment of pastoral Arabs. The next morning, seeing two horsemen proceeding towards the river, he followed them, but they had passed over an hour before he reached the bank, and no trace remained to show where they had crossed. The water was wild and deep, and the party were in extreme perplexity.

"At that moment a single rider appeared on the opposite bank two hundred yards lower down. We hastened towards him, and found the stream divided by a well wooded islet. The channel nearest to us seeming to be fordable, we passed over it at once; and, forcing the way through the tangles and brambles which opposed us, reached near enough to the water to perceive that it would be no easy matter to accomplish the passage. 'You are welcome,' said the horseman, who had not yet dismounted; 'let me see you cross.' 'Wullah!' replied Hassan, 'you were here first, and by your head we will not go before you.'

A Tartar Courier.

"The stream was very rapid, and swept round the island with much noise. The bank, on which stood the Tartar, for such he was, bearing despatches from Egypt for Ibrahim Pasha, was several feet higher than the ground we occupied. An express must not demur in the East, however, and he began to strip himself cursing the river, the letters, and the rains alternately in the course

of the operation. At length, with his most precious burthen, the letter-bag, on his head, he waded into the stream, and, when the water reached his chin, paused, and crying out 'Inshallah!' pitched it towards us; it fell short, and set out at speed down the river. The poor messenger stood immovable, his head above the water, and implored us by our fathers' souls to endeavour to save it, for it was sure to pay for the swimming. Fortunately, the despatches were caught in their course by the plants at the point of the island, and we were able to fish them on shore.

"The second attempt of the Tartar was still more unfortunate. With his clothes tied in a bundle on his head, he mounted on horseback to ride over, when, within a few hundred yards of the island, a bank of mud threw the horse upon his side, and away went the trio—the man, the horse, and the bundle—in the manner the letters had done; sometimes the poor animal's heels were uppermost,—sometimes the master's head. I felt like a shipwrecked seaman, who had seen the last hope of escape founder in its attempt to reach him. I knew not how to venture a passage that promised a similar catastrophe.

"After many struggles, the Tartar disengaged himself from his horse, and reached the shore. Here he stood for some time, calling to the animal in an encouraging tone 'Come, come!' and ever as the horse's head came above water in his turnings, he cast an intelligent glance at his master in reply. We followed his course as far as we could, and were happy to see him, when he reached smoother water, make steadily for the proper bank, where he waited quietly for the arrival of his naked rider.

"It now came to my turn. Hassan's 'Andiamo, signore,' was uttered several times before I quite made up my mind upon the subject. I was more successful in pitching over my bags than the Tartar had been; and tying my clothes upon my head as he had done, mounted and rode into the stream. I thought I had chosen a better starting place, and for some distance swam away boldly enough; but just when we reached the point desired, my horse disappeared from under me, and I sprawled away from him and disappeared under a hedge of blackberries that grows upon the banks of the river, and which was partially concealed by the flood. The more I struggled through this delicate border the more impenetrable it seemed. The horse, recovering himself, was close at my back, sinking and rising, and bumping me with his head. There was every prospect of his taking advantage of my body to get out of his difficulty; I made a desperate plunge, therefore; and clearing the hedge, fell upon my face in the mud, where I lay covered with blood and stuck full of thorns. Hassan more wisely swam across with the halter of his horse in his mouth."

To travel with comfort or advantage, a man must conform to the practice of the country. In the first place he ought to adopt the Eastern garb, both for its greater convenience and for health' sake. Considerable danger arises from travelling during the heat of the day from not having the body and especially the head sufficiently covered. The horses and mules cannot travel at a rapid pace; the body is not kept sufficiently in motion to excite perspiration; and the skin becomes dry and burning hot; the pulse full and quick; and fever is very apt to supervene. The body ought to be covered

with as much additional clothing as in the coldest weather, and the head enveloped in shawls, in order to keep up a constant moisture on the skin. Our tight fitting European garments, moreover, with their straps and buttons and braces, are sore incumbrances in a country where men sit down on the lap of mother earth with their heels tucked under them, and where they lie down to sleep at night without undressing. The thick folds of the turban are likewise invaluable as a protection against the direct rays of the sun, not to mention that they often save the unwary stranger from a broken pate. Both the outer and inner doors of the houses in many towns, particularly Jerusalem, are so low that new comers from Frankistan frequently give themselves violent blows on the head in their forgetfulness of the necessity of stooping.

Again,—the Orientals have, from the remotest time, been a wayfaring people; travelling is their education, their science, and they have deduced from it the art of dispensing with many things—an art which the European stranger among them will find it much to his advantage to study. Their baggage is contrived in the simplest and most portable form. That of a man who wishes to be completely provided, consists of a carpet, a mattress, a blanket, two saucepans with lids, fitting one into the other; two dishes, two plates, and a coffee-pot, all of copper, well tinned; a small wooden box for salt and pepper; six coffee-cups without handles in a leather box; a round leather table, which he suspends from the saddle of his horse; it has a running-string round the edge, by which it can be converted into a very serviceable bag; small leather bottles or bags for oil, melted butter, water, and brandy, (if the traveller be a Christian,) a pipe, a tinder-box, a cocoa-nut cup, some rice, dried raisins, dates, Cyprus cheese, and, above all, tobacco and coffee-berries, with a roaster and a wooden mortar, with a long handle of a peculiar shape, to pound and triturate the coffee into an impalpable powder. It is astonishing what effect the smallest portion of the strong coffee made by the Arabs has; no greater stimulus is required in the longest and most arduous journeys. It is universal throughout the East, but more used by the Arabs of the Desert than by

Eastern Coffee Mortar.

any other class; they will often go without food for twenty-four hours if they can but have recourse to the little dram of coffee, which, from the small compass in which they carry the apparatus, and the readiness with which it is made, they can always command. Its strengthening and exhilarating effects far exceed those it is possible for a dram of spirits to have on persons who indulge in strong liquors.

To the above list a tent may be added or not, as circumstances may require. In the region of Lebanon, where our first excursions will be made, one may almost always so adjust his movements as to find shelter for the night in a village or in a khân: but a man is certainly more independent who carries his house about with him; and under its cover he is at least safe from the bedfellows that murder sleep within the walls of almost every fixed habitation. Among the articles most useful in an encampment, and which are not procurable in Europe, the Turkish portable lantern must not be forgotten. When lighted and suspended from the roof its candle is protected from the air by an oiled canvas cylinder, which packs down flat when not in use. It gives a most agreeable light, is convenient to carry from tent to tent, or in the streets at night, and would afterwards serve as a very ornamental light for any small space in an English house.

If you have no tent, and be not near a khân, enter a village, choose out the best house you see, and you will hardly fail to meet with an hospitable reception at the hands of the simple and kind-hearted inmates. Every man you meet, particularly in the country of the Druses, greets you in a friendly manner, and readily stops to direct you if you ask your way. Often, as travellers pass before a garden, the children run out to them with baskets of figs or grapes, pressing them to eat of the contents, but unwilling to accept of any remuneration. When you enter a house, you will be treated, perhaps, with excellent wine of a rich flavour, and a scent that verifies the justice of the prophet's simile (Hosea xiv. 7). At any rate, they will set before you such fare as they have,—bread, fruit, and the produce of their dairy, and season it with a hearty welcome. They will assist you to prepare your coffee, and to drink it afterwards, and will assign you a place where you may spread your carpet, and rest till morning blushes. The evening is passed in pleasant discourse, introduced by the never-failing question, *Shoo ishdeed andac?* "What is new with you?" But this is never propounded till after the usual polite inquiries respecting your health, and whether your *kief*, your humour, is good. You are requested to describe your birth, parentage, and occupation: if women are in a majority, you must tell the names of all belonging to you, and draw little pictures of their beauties.—How many sisters have you, O Frank? Are you married? And if not, why not?—They bring their chubby imps about you, and ask you whether these, or the children in your own country, are the handsomer; whilst some aged dame, privileged by her years, will put a bolder question, and insist on knowing whether the women of Frankistan are equal to the dark-eyed beauties around you.

During these halts you will often witness the simple and expeditious mode of baking bread, practised in the mountains. They dig a hole in the ground, which they line with a thick coat of plaster, leaving the cavity in shape and

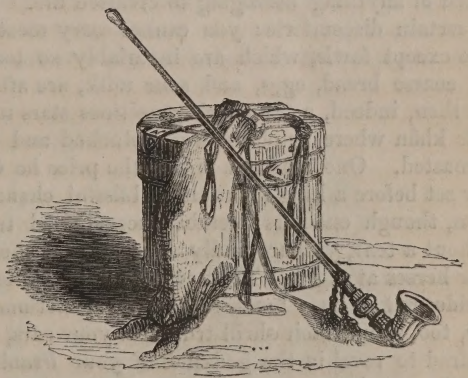
size like a large cooking pot, a little bulging in the middle. When the plaster is dry, a fire is lighted on the bottom of the hole, and fed with small sticks till the sides are well heated; the flames are then suffered to go down, leaving a mass of live coals on the bottom. Meanwhile the dough has been prepared, and divided into portions of a convenient size, which are pressed out on a board till they are as large as a common plate, and about as thick as the back of a stout carving knife. These soft disks are taken up on a pad, and struck against the inside of the simple oven, where they adhere, and are baked in about a minute. They are then withdrawn and others put in their places with great rapidity. There are usually several women engaged at the same time about the *tanmoor*, or oven, and being remarkably expert in the business, they require but very short notice to prepare bread enough for a meal.

Some of the modes of salutation in the East are rather puzzling to those who are not familiar with them. The mountain embrace of welcome and friendship consists in throwing the right arm over the shoulder, bringing both faces in contact, and sometimes kissing the cheek. "Many is the time and oft," says Col. Napier, "when undergoing this ordeal at the hands of some grisly old emir or sheykh, I have wished the loving venerable at the bottom of the Red Sea, or that he had deputed one of his granddaughters to perform the ceremony in his stead."

An English gentleman is walking in the streets of Damascus, when up comes a respectable-looking Turk and slaps him on the breast: the Englishman, not knowing what to make of this, stares at the Turk, who seems quite disappointed at not receiving a return in kind for his civility. In the end it turns out, that the blow was not meant for an invitation to a pugilistic set-to, but as a friendly token of recognition, such as is very common throughout the East. Again, a traveller riding towards the ruins of Cæsarea, sees two Arabs advancing in the opposite direction, mounted on very fine horses. As soon as they catch sight of him they raise their long spears in the air, and shouting "Yullah!" dash at him full tilt: he halts; they circle round him once, then wish him a happy journey, and ride on their way. Here is an incident of a somewhat similar kind that occurred to Sir Frederick Henniker:—"We were now within a few paces of the tent, when seven men sprang upon their feet; four of them drew pistols from their belts, and presented them at our heads; a fifth raised an axe; and the elder of the party, raising a tremendous yell, ran forward towards our sheykh, wielding a club as if to kill and bury him at a blow; in an instant he dropped his herculean weapon, and placing his right hand against the right hand of the sheykh, and then on his own breast, said, 'Salam alekum'—Peace be to you! This was answered by 'Alekum salam!' and a similar movement of the hand. The same ceremony was performed respectively and respectfully by each individual of our party with each individual of theirs; and thus having given and received the Arab assurance of friendship, we were at liberty to consider ourselves safe. To take aim at a person is meant as a compliment, which is sometimes increased by firing." Scenes like this, though commonplace affairs in the Desert, must be looked on by persons new to the ways of the Bedouins with something like the wonder which a

son of the Desert would probably feel at witnessing the salutes exchanged between an English frigate and a friendly fortress.

The khâns of Northern Syria differ from those generally found in the East, which latter are intended merely for the accommodation of caravans carrying with them their own provisions for man and beast, and consist of four wings round a court-yard, in which the beasts of burden may be inclosed. The lodgings are cells, where you find nothing but bare walls, dust, and sometimes scorpions. But the khâns northward of Tyre are small, and are inhabited by a keeper, who sells coffee, provisions, and the like, to guests, and furnishes them with fire and the means of cooking for themselves. They are hence called in Arabic *shops* (Dukkân), and supply, in some small degree, the place of inns. They may be described as cabins, usually divided into two chambers, with walls badly built of rough stone, without mortar, the gaping interstices of which give free passage to wind, rain, and smoke: they are almost always blackened by the latter both within and without. The walls are about seven or eight feet high: across them are laid large limbs of trees with their principal branches adhering to them; and dry faggots thrown on these, complete the roof. The unpaved floor is a bed of dust in dry weather—of mud in wet. Upon one or two posts that serve to support the roof, the traveller hangs his cloak and his arms. A wood fire is constantly burning on a rude hearth in a corner, and one or two copper coffee-cans are always full of strong muddy coffee. When the traveller arrives at the gate of the khân, his attendants spread his straw mat and his carpet in a corner of the smoky hovel; he sits down, calls for coffee, and smokes his pipe whilst his people are collecting a little dry wood to cook his frugal fare. This commonly consists of two or three barley-cakes scarcely baked on a heated stone, and (if he can get them) some pieces of mutton chopped small and cooked with rice in a copper pan. But most frequently the last-named viands are not to be had for love or money in the khân, and he must content himself with his cakes and the excellent water that is never wanting in the vicinity of these places. The servants, mookres, and horses, bivouac in the open air.



A wooden Box for holding Coffee, the ordinary Travelling Pipe, and a Tobacco Pouch made of the Skin of a Lizard.

The position of these khâns may generally be recognised a long way off, by means of some remarkable tree overhanging a fountain near them. These are very often sycamores, of a species not known in Europe. They bear fruit somewhat resembling the fig: one of the Prophets called himself "a gatherer of sycamore fruit:" the wood is valuable, being hard and very durable. The

tree attains the magnitude of our largest oaks, and a still greater longevity; the trunk sometimes measures thirty or forty feet round, or more; the branches begin to expand at a height of fifteen or twenty feet from the earth, the lower ones spreading horizontally to a great extent, and those above them grouping themselves into conical shapes, so that the tree, seen from a distance, has very much the look of our beech trees. These sycamores cast their hospitable shadows to a great distance from their trunks, and it is not an uncommon circumstance to see fifty or sixty camels and horses, and as many Arabs, encamped, during the heat of the day, under cover afforded by one of these noble trees. But here, as in everything else, we are painfully struck with the improvidence of the Orientals, and their government. These trees, which ought to be carefully preserved as natural hostelries, bountifully adapted to the necessities of the caravans, are abandoned to the stupid recklessness of those they shelter: the Arabs light their fires at the foot of the sycamores, and their venerable trunks are, most of them, blackened and scathed by the flames. Dr. Hogg succeeded in bringing over, from Cairo to Naples, in a healthy state, four plants of the Sycamore Fig, (Ficus Sycamorus) the first, strange as it may seem, that have been naturalised in Europe. The coffins, utensils, &c., of the ancient Egyptians, still discovered sound and perfect, were made of the wood of this tree.

Travelling on horseback, even though the pace be moderate, involves hardships, exposure and fatigue. It is not a recreation suited to all men, and is trying even to those who are vigorous, and indifferent to luxuries and comforts: the mountains (not to speak of the desert) afford nothing like snug and easy accommodation for those who feel a prejudice in favour of living in houses, or indeed of anything belonging to civilised life. Even in a short ramble there are certain discomforts: you cannot carry meat with you, and you can get none except fowls, which are invariably so tough as to be hardly eatable; and coarse bread, eggs, and sour milk, are after all but sorry fare. Now and then, indeed, a traveller's propitious stars may guide him to some hospitable khân where ortolans, ready plucked and trussed, await his coming to be roasted. One piastre a bird is the price he will pay for the daintiest dish ever set before a king: but these blissful chances are few and far between. Then, though one gets tolerably accustomed to sleeping in a tent, or even without a tent, you are sadly disturbed by the neighing and screaming of your horses at night. They are the most gentle and docile creatures possible to ride, but, if they break loose, they sometimes fight like tigers. Mosquitoes, too, sound their shrill trump in your ears, summoning the host of their kindred to revel in the godsend of your Frank blood. Gadflies persecute your horses almost to madness, and sometimes favour yourself with a nip: they render travelling in the heat of the day excessively harassing, and if the tent happens to be pitched near marshy ground, the horses are often so distressed by insect tormentors of all kinds, that they can neither feed nor rest.

Many brooks and basins of fountains abound with leeches, which often cause horses great annoyance by getting into their mouths; and men even, drinking incautiously at the brook, not unfrequently meet with the same accident without perceiving it at the time. When a horse is the sufferer, the leech fixes itself in the soft parts of the inner mouth, and remains there

some days before it becomes swelled to a size sufficient for its detection and extraction. When it has gorged itself, it may without much difficulty be scraped out by the hand wrapped in a horse-cloth, or other coarse and rough fabric, to which the animal adheres. When the accident happens to a man, it is often attended with great inconvenience. "I have seen several instances," says Dr. Russell, "where, a leech not being suspected, the blood which from time to time came from the throat was ascribed to some other causes. The animal sometimes fixes in such a situation, and contracts in such a manner, when an instrument is introduced in order to examine the fauces, that it remains perfectly concealed; at other times, when visible, it is not without difficulty extracted by the forceps; this is, however, the only effectual method. It often happened that the patient (where the leech was invisible) was able only in a very confused way to indicate where he felt it; in which case it was found best to make him keep his mouth open and wait patiently till the animal, stretching out when unalarmed, detected itself from behind the palate; for every attempt with an instrument made it retreat and lurk more closely." Many of Bonaparte's soldiers in Egypt were bled into a consumption by leeches admitted into the mouth with their drink, till Larrey detected the cause and applied the remedy. Whenever water looks suspicious, travellers should follow the example of the Arabs, who on such occasions strain the water they are about to drink through a corner of their burnoos.

A traveller in these countries, we are told by Captain Irby, however much the very thoughts may shock him at first, must make up his mind and reconcile his feelings to being constantly covered with fleas, and something worse besides. "We kill every day from ten to twenty of these guests, which are always to be found on every mat or cushion used in the country. These nauseous visitors seldom get into the head, but crawl about your shirt and clothes. Every native you see in the country is covered with vermin; and if you ask why they have such a plentiful store, while we are comparatively so little annoyed by them, they tell you, 'it is the curse of God on them.' The other day I cut my foot, and our Arab *seys*, who is always washing himself, and is a very cleanly person, tore off a small piece of the sleeve of his shirt for my hurt; the piece was about three inches long by two wide, and before using it I killed three—no matter what—and two fleas on it. This will speak more than all I can say on the subject. Bugs are also very plentiful, and in Egypt our rooms were full of them."

But notwithstanding all these drawbacks, there are incomparably greater advantages to set off against them. The horseman feels none of that languor and feverishness that so generally result from travelling on wheels. The very hardships bring enjoyment with them, in invigorated health, braced nerves, and elevated spirits. You are in immediate contact with Nature; every circumstance of scenery and climate becomes of interest and value, and the minutest incident of country or of local habits cannot escape observation. A burning sun may sometimes exhaust, or a summer storm may drench you; but what can be more exhilarating than the sight of the lengthened troop of variegated and gay costumes dashing at full speed along, to the crack of the Tartar whip, and the wild whoop of the surrigée? What more picturesque than to watch their reckless career over upland or dale, or along the waving line of the landscape—bursting away on a dewy morn, or racing "home" on a rosy eve?

"You are constantly in the full enjoyment of the open air of a heavenly climate—the lightness of the atmosphere passes into your spirits—the serenity of the clime sinks into the mind; you are prepared to enjoy all things and all states; you are ready for work—you are glad of rest; you are, above all things, ready for your food, which is always savoury when it can be got, and never unseasonable when forthcoming. Still I must in candour avow, that no small portion of the pleasures of Eastern travel arises from sheer hardship and privation, which afford to the few unhappy beings who have not to labour for their daily bread, a transient insight into the real happiness enjoyed three times a day by the whole mass of mankind who labour for their bread and hunger for their meals."

Never does a man feel himself so all but absolutely independent of circumstance or assistance as when travelling in the East, provided he has had the good fortune to make all his arrangements strictly according to the rule and custom of the country. If you can do this, "you will find, in the desert as in the peopled city, your path pursued by the associations of home, and you will become practically acquainted with those feelings of locomotive independence, and that combination of family ties and nomade existence, which are the basis of the Eastern character. How do these inquiries, which appear at a distance so abstruse, become homely and simple when you surround yourself with the atmosphere of custom! You can at once lay your hand on motives; you spring at once to conclusions without the trouble of reflection, or the risks which so unfortunately attend the parturitions of logic. Placed among a strange people, if you inquire, you must use language not applicable to their ideas; if you argue, you deal with your impressions, not theirs; but when you put yourself in a position similar to theirs, you can feel as they do, and that is the final result of useful information. Burke, in his essay on the 'Beautiful and Sublime,' mentions an ancient philosopher who, when he wished to understand the character of a man, used to imitate him in everything, endeavoured to catch the tone of his voice, and even tried to look like him: never was a better rule laid down for a traveller.

"Thus drawn within the pale of Eastern existence, what interesting trains of thought—what contrasts arise at every turn, and what importance and value trivial circumstances, not merely those of the East, but those of Europe

also, assume! How are you struck with relationships, unobserved before, between domestic manners and historic events! . . . . . If I might recall one hour from this simple and nomade state of existence more delicious than the rest, it would be that of the evening bivouac, when you choose your ground and pitch your tent wherever fancy or caprice may decide; on a mountain brow, in a secluded vale, by a running brook, or in a sombre forest; and where, become familiar with mother Earth, you lay yourself down on her naked bosom. There you may establish sudden community with her other children—the forester, the lowland ploughman, or the mountain shepherd; or call in to share your evening repast, some weary traveller, whose name, race, and land of birth may be equally unknown, and who may, in the pleasing uncertainty but certain instruction of such intercourse, wile the evening away with tales of the Desert or stories of the Capital, and may have visited in this land of pilgrims the streams of Cashmere or the parched Sahara.

"But though never can you better enjoy, still nowhere can you more easily dispense with man's society than in your tent after a long day's fatigue. It is a pleasure which words cannot tell, to watch that portable

Halt of Travellers near Bechiza.

home—everywhere the same—spreading around its magic circle, and rearing on high its gilded ball; as cord by cord is picketed down, it assumes its wonted forms, and then spreads wide its festooned porch, displaying within mosaic carpets and piled cushions. There the traveller reclines after the labour of the day and the toil of the road, his ablutions first performed at the running stream, and his *namaz* recited—to gaze away the last gleam of twilight in that absorbed repose which is not reflection, which is not vacancy, but a calm communing with Nature, and a silent observation of men and things. Thus that pensive mood is fostered, and that soberness of mind

acquired, which, though not profound, is never trivial. Thus at home in the wilds should the Mussulman be seen—picturesque in his attire, sculpturesque in his attitude, with dignity on his forehead, welcome on his lips, and poetry in all around. With such a picture before him, the ever-busy Western may guess at the frame of mind of those to whom such existence is habitual, and who thence carry into the business of life the calm we can only find in solitude, when, escaping from our self-created world of circumstance, we can visit and dwell for a moment with the universe, and converse with it in a language without words.

"Nor are these, the shadows of which I have endeavoured to catch, the whole enjoyment of Eastern travel. The great source of its interest to a stranger, is—man; the character of the people, and their political circumstances; facts new and varied; action dramatic, simple, and personal. With us, the national circumstances which demand the inquirer's attention, are of so analytical and scientific a character, that they are unapproachable, save by those who have devoted a lifetime of labour to each particular branch. He who has done so, becomes absorbed in an exclusive study; he who has not, has no right to opine and shrink from examining. But in the East, by the simplicity of system in public combinations, and by the clear perception of moral right and wrong in personal character,—all subjects worthy of engaging our attention, are placed within the reach of the unscientific, and reduced to the level of ordinary capacity. But the stranger must commence with laying previous opinions aside, as the first step towards becoming acquainted with feelings different from those implanted by the education of his national habits, and by the experience of his native land."*

CHAPTER VII.

LEBANON—ITS GENERAL CHARACTER—ITS INHABITANTS.

THE great mountain range known by the general name of Lebanon, extends from the parallel nearly coinciding with the mouth of the Nahr el Berd, about ten miles north of Tripoli, to another corresponding with the mouth of the Kasmieh, between Sour and Seyde, (Tyre and Sidon). These mountains are parted throughout their whole length into two branches, by the fertile valley of the Bekaa, the ancient Cælesyria; the western branch is the true Lebanon, in contradistinction to which the eastern branch is called by Europeans, Anti-lebanon, a name unknown, however, to the inhabitants. *Jebel Leban*, or the milky mountain, has no doubt derived this appellation from the snow that rests on its heights for several months in the year, and from the white and chalky aspect presented in many places by its naked calcareous flanks. The length of this range may be, in round numbers, ninety English miles, and its breadth from twenty-five to thirty. The space included within these limits is divided into ten districts, possessing several

* Urquhart, Spirit of the East, vol. i. pp. 8 et seq.

little towns, and from 6 to 700 villages. The rock that constitutes it is chiefly limestone, almost as hard as marble, and susceptible of a fine polish: the hardness of the rock increases as you advance northward, till in the mountains near Antioch, you find it passing into the character of perfect marble. The recesses of Lebanon, rich in mineral productions, deserve to be carefully examined. Near the sea the dislocated strata have almost everywhere a deep chalybeate tinge, and compact nodules of iron ore are of frequent occurrence. Some iron is wrought in one or two places, and heaps of scoria attest the existence of considerable workings in former days. Pit-coal is found in the neighbourhood of Beyroot, where mining operations were begun by Ibraham Pasha. Other metallic ores are also found in various parts of the mountains.

Lebanon, viewed in the mass, presents but few strongly marked outlines: its usual form is that of lengthened and uniformly undulating ridges, with round isolated heads resembling broad depressed domes. Opposite Beyroot its aspect grows more bold, and near Tripoli it exhibits in the peak of Jebel Makmel, the only sharply defined pyramidal form discoverable in the whole chain. This summit rises above the limit of perpetual snow, which can hardly be asserted of the Sunnin, though the latter has commonly passed for the highest mountain in Syria. Russegger* accords this honour to the Jebel el Sheikh, whose name indeed (the chieftain mountain) seems to imply this preëminence. This latter is the southern termination of the Anti-lebanon chain, the general elevation of which hardly exceeds 5000 feet. The height of the Jebel el Sheikh, Russegger estimates at 9000 Parisian feet: this, although 1400 feet lower than Mount Etna, is more than twice the height of Ben-Nevis (4370 feet), the most elevated point in Great Britain. As we advance still further south towards Judea, we find the mountains diminishing in height but assuming a sterner aspect; they lose their verdure; their valleys grow narrower; they become dry and stony, and terminate at the Dead Sea in a pile of desolate rocks, full of precipices and caverns, among which are the grottoes of Engaddi, ill-famed as a receptacle for desperate outlaws in all ages.

The summits of Lebanon are almost always bare, and its craggy sides are in their upper third destitute of timber, save here and there a little clump of pines, like a scanty tuft of hair on a bald head; and in one place, the diminished remains of the once lordly cedars; but thorny creepers are abundant, and heath and other Alpine plants spring up in the clefts even of the topmost crags, and grow to great luxuriance. In the middle region the ground is generally rude, stony, and hard to work even when it has been prepared for culture: yet this stubborn soil sustains the densest and most thriving population in all Syria. The iron industry of the Druses and Maronites, prompted by the freedom and security they enjoy in their native fastnesses, has converted the steep sides of the mountain into a series of terraces supported by huge blocks of stone, rising one above the other like flights of giant stairs, carpeted with verdure. From 100 to 120 of such gradations have been reckoned on the face of a single declivity. Every device that ingenuity could invent, or patient toil could execute, has been employed in

* Russegger, Reisen in Europa, Asien, und Africa. Stuttgart, 1842.

economising the rills and streams for the irrigation of the terraces. Sometimes the water is led by a thousand windings along the declivities, so as to lose no foot of elevation that can be profitably retained; sometimes it is dammed up in the narrow glens, in order to raise it above its natural level. The stony soil gratefully repays this assiduous care: wherever it is retained by walls and refreshed with a little water, it displays an astonishing fertility; the mulberry, the fig, the olive, the vine, and the walnut, flourish luxuriantly, and yield an excellent return. What a delightful surprise it is to the traveller, when, after clambering for hours over steep and naked crags, he suddenly discovers in the green lap of a highland glen, or on the plateau of a rocky pyramid, a handsome village built of white stone, inhabited by a numerous and thriving population, with a moorish castle in the midst of it, a monastery near it, at its foot a rushing brook, and all around a belt of foliage waving over little garden patches of corn.

All the small plains and valleys at the foot of the mountains, between them and the hills, are admirably fertile; the soil is rich, light, very productive, and requires but little labour. Almost every kind of culture may be practised in them with success; the tobacco they grow, above all, is of an excellent quality, and bears the highest reputation.

The loftier portions of the mountains in which the limestone formation prevails, though highly fertile wherever the rock is decomposed, and richly cultivated, is far inferior in picturesque beauty to the district occupied by a red sandstone—a region of pine forest and aromatic herbage which reminded one traveller's party of the Estrelle, by the odours they crushed as they rode from its gummy vegetation. Throughout all this portion of the mountain you may find a profusion of flowers; the blue convolvulus, and crimson anemone, the caper, the myrtle, and the rose:

> —through the grass
> The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
> Of summer birds sing welcome as ye pass;
> Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their dyes,
> Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
> The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
> Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

Lebanon is in truth a majestic region, where every step discloses fresh images of beauty or grandeur, sometimes fantastic wildness, but always variety. It seems, as it were, one of Nature's favourite models, in which she delights to blend together her most sublime creations with her tenderest grace and loveliness: it is as though she had here designed of old, to set before the infant race of man the richest assemblage of those elements she elsewhere severally employs to startle, awe, exalt, refine, soothe, and delight the soul. Here, as in the Alps, the traveller journeys whole days to reach a place which was in sight at his departure; he winds, he descends, he skirts the hills, he climbs; but hardly would he, if he could, abridge the way, or grudge one minute of the toil that wins him such a succession of pure and ennobling pleasures. Sometimes his path lies along the dry bed of a wintry torrent, at the bottom of a narrow ravine cleft by an earthquake through the solid rock. Naked ramparts tower perpendicularly on either hand to a height of 300 or 400 feet. Below, gigantic blocks, many of them bulkier than

lofty houses, lie scattered in every variety of position, like pebbles flung from the hand of a child. Some rest upon their broad bases, as if destined to eternal repose; others, suspended on their angles by some unseen pressure, seem still in the act of rolling onwards; while the dim and broken light that plays upon the uncertain forms and outlines adds to the illusion, and gives this chaos of rocks the semblance of a stony flood. Sometimes emerging from these gloomy gorges the traveller comes suddenly upon a secluded highland valley, a little paradise of verdure, embosomed within an amphitheatre of mountains. On every side are green flights of steps as if leading up to some great temple of nature, and villages hung like swallow nests on the very face of the cliff, and so arranged, that the terraced roofs of one row of houses serve for a street to those above them. You would think they must be fastened with cramping irons to the rock, not to slide down the sheer descent. Looking at these villages from a little distance, they appear almost to touch one another, and it is not till you have measured the ground between them with your steps, that you can be convinced how long a time it takes to traverse the deep chasms, and the tortuous paths by which alone access can be had from one of them to another. They are sometimes but a stone's throw apart; in some you can distinctly hear a person speaking to you from the adjoining one; yet it would occupy you an hour or two to pass from your position to his.

When you climb the higher ridges, every bend of the rock surprises you with some new delight,—glimpses of the seaboard plain and its towns, with the blue expanse beyond, valley emerging into valley, and wooded knolls, and rainbow-tinted cliffs chequering the bright landscape with fantastic shadows, and waters flashing from the rocks in sheeted cascades, or dancing in small mazy rills to their own ceaseless music, or plunging unseen, but not unheard, through chasms and "caverns measureless to man." Or it may be, that as you cast your eyes downwards you see nothing but a rolling mist concealing the low grounds. Presently, while you listen to the measured tolling of the convent bell, or the shepherd's pipe and the tinkling of his flocks, the mist slowly disperses, its last fleecy remnant floating away like a speck of down from the breast of a bird, and the whole scene is revealed to your eyes in all its impressive loveliness.—And then you come perhaps on the verge of a beetling cliff, and begin to descend by a winding path scarcely two feet wide, and strewed over with loose rolling stones, so polished by the rains and by the hoofs of cattle, as to call into action the utmost sagacity of the horses and mules, and oblige them to use the most deliberate caution at every step in choosing the spot on which they shall next set their foot. A false step would be destruction, for on one side is a wall of rock, and on the other a fearful precipice. The wisest thing the rider can do on such perilous ground is to leave his beast entirely to its own discretion. Instinct beats reason hollow on these occasions. The animals lowering their heads, and pausing while they carefully scrutinise and snuff the stones, never fail to find a place on which the foot can rest securely. By treading continually on the same spot they at last work the rock into a series of small cavities in which the hoof sinks some inches, and it is only by the hold thus given to the horse's foot that the animal is able to keep on his legs. Sometimes the continuity of

these rock ladders is broken by steps two feet high, or by blocks of stone too large to surmount, so that you must twist your way through crooked openings barely wide enough to admit your horse's legs. No traveller can risk life and limb in these dangerous passes without amazement to think such a country should abound with fine horses, or that men should trust themselves to their backs in a country where, if they must needs ride, you would naturally expect to see them mounted on goats, like the picture of Sir Taffy in our old nursery books. Yet the native horsemen ascend and descend these fearful ledges with their pipes in their mouths, and with as fearless indifference as we jog along our turnpike roads. The amazing surefootedness of the horses in this country, arises altogether from the manner in which they are brought up. A colt is as much domesticated in an Arab cottage as the pig in an Irish hovel; and as soon as the mare can be mounted, the colt trots at her heels wherever she goes. In this way they are accustomed from the time they are a month old to pick their steps over the most rugged mountain paths, and to meet all the sights and noises of a town. It is very rarely indeed that they either shy or stumble; and the traveller soon acquires confidence enough in their sagacity and nimbleness to enjoy his rides with no more sense of danger than is just sufficient to add a racy zest to his pleasure.

For the multitude of its waters Lebanon is akin to old Homer's "fountain-gushing Ida:" besides their refreshing and fertilising effects, others, no less striking, are wrought by them on the economy of the mountain. When swollen by the rains and melted snows, their volume and the steepness of

Natural Arch over the Nahrel Leban.

their headlong course make their impetus resistless. In some places they have burst through the rock, leaving natural arches above them, such as that of Nahr el Leban, or the river of milk, which flows into the river of Beyroot: this arch is upwards of one hundred and sixty feet long, eighty-five wide, and nearly two hundred feet high above the torrent.

Frequently the traveller descries on the hill sides what seem to him at a distance artificial ruins, great piles of rocks stripped by the waters, skeletons

Convent of Mar Serkis, with the singular pointed rocks above it.

of hills which the floods and the winds have gnawed for ages. In many places the waters, meeting with inclined beds, have undermined the intermediate earth, and formed caverns like that which we have already described; in others they have tunnelled out subterraneous channels, through which they flow for a part of the year. But these picturesque situations sometimes become tragical. From thaws and earthquakes, rocks have been known to lose their equilibrium, roll down upon the adjacent houses, and bury the inhabitants: such an accident happened about eighty years ago, and overwhelmed a whole village near Mar-Djordjos, without leaving a single trace to discover where it formerly stood. Somewhat more recently, near the same spot, a whole hill-side, covered with mulberries and vines, was detached by a sudden thaw, and, sliding down the declivity of the rock, was launched altogether, like a ship from the stocks, into the valley.

The Syrian rivers, most of which rise in Lebanon, enjoy, like those of Greece, a renown far more than commensurate with the ordinary volume of their waters; since, from the proximity of their sources to the sea they have not time to accumulate in long valleys before they find an exit. The largest of them might more properly be called brooks; for such, in fact, they are, till swollen by the rains and melted snows: but, they are mountain brooks, rapid, brawling, and exulting. The channels of the Orontes and the Jordan, the two most important, are scarcely sixty paces wide at their mouths: the latter, indeed, has considerable depth; but if the Orontes were not impeded by successive obstacles, it would be quite dry during the summer. Most of these rivers that empty themselves into the Mediterranean are fordable, in autumn, near their mouths, in consequence of the bars thrown up by the

conflict of their waters with those of the sea: but the attempt to cross them is often extremely hazardous from the impetuosity of the current, and many fatal accidents are recorded as having befallen persons who incautiously adventured upon these treacherous shallows.

Subterraneous rivulets, as we have already said, are common throughout Syria: there are some near Damascus, at the sources of the Orontes, and at those of the Jordan. That of Mar-Hanna, or St. John, a Greek convent near the village of Shouair, opens by a gulf called *El-baloua*, or the Swallower. It is an aperture about ten feet wide, situated in the middle of a hollow: at the depth of fifteen feet is a sort of first bottom, but it only hides a very deep lateral opening. Some years before Volney's time it was shut, as it had served to conceal a murder. The winter rains coming on, the waters collected and formed a pretty deep lake; but some small streams penetrating among the stones, they were soon stripped of the earth that cemented them together, and the pressure of the water prevailing, the whole obstacle was removed with an explosion like thunder; and so violent was the reaction of the compressed air, that a column of water spouted up and fell upon a house at the distance of at least two hundred paces. The current this occasioned formed a whirlpool, which swallowed up the trees and vines planted in the hollow, and threw them out by the second aperture.

The reader, accustomed only to the denser air of Europe, can scarcely form a just idea of the ethereal subtilty and transparency of the Syrian atmosphere. It is this that gives to the prospect from the mountains an amplitude and distinctness unparalleled in other lands. When Moses went up to Pisgah he gazed over the whole inheritance of his people from north to south, and to the utmost sea: this he might have done without having had a miraculous power of vision imparted to him; * and so might any man at this day if he attained sufficient elevation. Four observers might command the whole of Syria, and from the tops of Casius, Lebanon, and Tabor, let nothing of a certain magnitude escape them within that vast horizon. † Standing on the top of the Sunnin, the spectator has on one side the indefinite expanse of the desert, stretching away towards the Persian Gulf; on the opposite side, the sea, melting afar into the firmament, suggests to his mind the idea of infinite space; hardly can he at first distinguish between sea and sky at their line of junction, but is tempted to fancy, that the solid earth floats in an immense double ocean. It is not till he looks more narrowly and sees the little white sails specking the blue expanse of the waters, that he can get the better of the illusion. Landwards, he discerns every sinuosity and indentation of the coast; every cape, promontory, and creek; every mountain mass with its rocks, woods, torrents, hillsides, villages, and towns,—an interminable extent, and all as distinctly traced as though he were looking on a huge map or model stretched before him on a level floor. He fancies he could reach in a few hours points that are actually three or four days' journey removed from him. His eyes seem to dilate with the immense field of vision presented to them, and his imagination outstripping sight, glances in an instant from Antioch to Jerusalem.

Usually after mid-day, clouds begin to form partially over the sea, and,

* The Rev. Vere Monro. † Volney.

whilst they seldom overcast the whole scene, they add inconceivably to its beauty. Where the sea is unclouded, it appears as smooth as a frozen lake; elsewhere, it is covered with immense rolling masses, severally like hills of cotton or wool; when viewed altogether, their irregular undulations, and the fleecy whiteness of their upper surfaces, strongly illuminated by the sun, remind one of a vast forest loaded with new-fallen snow.

"To make the scene still more interesting," says Mr. Paxton, who witnessed such a spectacle from the top of the Sunnin, "a wind set in from the sea, and drove the masses of cloud against the mountains. We saw the plain covered and again laid bare, as masses of clouds like the irregular columns of an army passed over it—drove against the mountains—rose higher and higher up its sides—and at last swept over us and by us in huge piles. It was not one large dense cloud, but a multitude of clouds of various sizes and at different heights. The sun pouring its flood of light upon these masses, so various in height, density, and rapidity of motion, presented the most brilliant and perpetually varying spectacle that I have ever seen. We had all the variety of tints and colouring that light and shade can make, and that ever-changing aspect which is presented by the kaleidoscope. There was, however, no rain."

The extraordinary transparency of the Syrian atmosphere occasions some curious optical illusions. The apparent distances of all objects are surprisingly diminished: the eye requires to undergo a new education to enable it to overcome this impression. "I am perpetually struck with this," says

Village of Brumanah.

Mr. Paxton, "when looking down from Brumanah (a village in the lower range of Lebanon) to Beyroot, and the long line of coast which lies to the north and south. When I stand on some one of the points of the ridge that

runs out towards Beyroot, the town appears so near, and the bay at such a short distance below me, that I can hardly get clear of the impression, that I could throw a finger stone into the bay. The ascent and descent, three or four times repeated, have, however, given me matter-of-fact proof, that it takes nearly four hours of hard travel to pass the space that lies between Brumanah and Beyroot." The fact may be easily explained. We are accustomed to judge of the relative dimensions of bodies partly by the angle under which rays from their extremities meet at the eye, and partly by the intensity of the light reflected from their surfaces severally: if the dimensions be known, or nearly so, the same data enable us to judge of the relative distances; but that we may do this with any precision, it is evident that the character of the medium through which we see must remain tolerably uniform, for light is much more rapidly absorbed and dispersed in its passage through a dense medium than through a rare one. If the reader has ever dived with his eyes open, let him fancy himself endowed with the eyes of a fish, and habituated only to see through water, and then let him imagine his perplexity if he were suddenly obliged to exert his powers of vision in the air: the confusion he would feel in his notions of aërial perspective would differ in degree, but not in kind, from that experienced by a spectator transferred from beneath the vaporous skies of the north to the pure mountain air of Syria.

There are other curious optical phenomena witnessed in the mountains, the causes of which cannot be so distinctly assigned. Strange appearances are very often observed on the setting sun: they begin about the time the lower edge of the luminary touches the line of the horizon. The lower part at times appears to *flatten up*, the upper to *flatten down*, and at times the sides *flatten in*, so that the disk of the sun forms nearly a square. But it is not very often it takes this shape. More frequently, about the time one half the disk is sunk below the horizon, a portion of the remainder seems to separate from the main body, assuming the form of an inverted cone or crescent, divided from the lower portion by a black mark of the apparent breadth of an inch or thereabouts. This crown-like appearance is at times distinctly visible after the disk of the sun has disappeared; at other times the body of the sun seems surrounded with a groove and a band, and looks not unlike the capital of a pillar. Repeatedly it has been observed, as it dipped under the horizon, flattening down and spreading out horizontally, till it looked no bigger vertically than a stout walking stick, while it seemed nearly a yard in breadth. But the most singular fact of all remains to be told. "We have several times seen the sun appear distinctly under the horizon after the luminous aspect was wholly gone. It appeared as a dark mass, nearly of the shape of the sun, but much larger. It seemed under the water, and gradually to sink deeper and deeper. This sinking of it below the line of the horizon makes it appear to approach nearer to the spectator. I saw it on one occasion most distinctly when its upper edge appeared a full yard below the line of the horizon. It then gradually became fainter and fainter, until it disappeared."* These phenomena do not occur every night, and seldom are the forms the same for two nights successively.

* Paxton.

Though the exact mechanism by which these effects are produced may be a mystery, their general causes may be guessed. The spectator's position is on the heights near Brumanah. The plain beneath him must be greatly heated, and the air over it highly rarified, much more so than that by which he is immediately surrounded. Further on is the sea, the air over which is cooler. Then it is to be observed that, looking from Brumanah, the sun is seen setting over Cyprus, which lies on the very verge of the horizon, at such a distance that it is not always distinctly visible. Now Cyprus is an island of considerable size, and not having much growth, is greatly heated by the action of the sun. Thus the rays of the setting sun, to reach the eye of a spectator at Brumanah,* must pass through several alternations of warm and rare, cold and dense columns of air, and so undergo an extraordinary series of refractions.

It would be hard to choose between the rival beauties of the summer days and nights in this enchanting region. By day, you have the sun shining in a sky that puts to shame the vaunted heavens of Italy; by night, the stars glow with unparalleled splendour in a firmament so pure, you almost fancy your eye can penetrate further into its marvellous depths than in any other land. Most picturesque by either light is the aspect of the long caravan winding in single file from height to height, like a huge coiling snake, its mid length lost in the depths of the gorge, or dimly seen through the spray of the cascades, while its head emerges into the sunshine upon the opposite declivity. There is a delightful excitement in roaming among the mountains by night; now riding over open braes in the broad moonlight; now winding along intricate and rugged paths through the thick groves of pine trees; scrambling up the dry bed of a winter torrent, and then skirting along the verge of some steep descent; the village lights faintly glimmering in the bottom of the valley, or midway in the heavens, and no sound heard but the rushing of the wind and the creaking of the pine-trees. And then the bivouac:—the horses and mules are picketed here and there round the camps, the fires are lighted, swarthy faces bent over them, intent on the preparation of supper, quiver and change like goblin visages in the lurid smoke; groups are listening to interminable Arab tales of romance, or burnishing their arms and repairing their cattle gear; a few wild figures rolled up in rough capotes are lying on the grass or round the flickering fires. At last the whole caravan are asleep, some under tents or the rude shelter of a wigwam khan, but the greater part sleep *à la belle étoile*. In the morning they wake with the fresh breeze on their faces, and the hum of bees in their ears.

Syria is divided as to climate into three longitudinal zones by the mountains that run through its length. The air on the sea coast is hot and moist, that on the eastern plains is hot and dry; for the moisture carried towards the

* Speaking of Brumanah, Mr. Paxton says—"Some time before I got out of quarantine there was a death in the family of the emir of this village; and, according to custom, the people were not allowed to wash their clothes for forty days. As they are not much given to cleanliness at any time, this was an order singularly out of place. About the time I came up, the people were most fearfully dirty: the days of restriction are, however, past, and *it is thought they have been using water.*"

latter from the coast by the prevailing westerly winds is intercepted and conseded by the mountains. The middle mountainous region ranges through every gradation of temperature, from the extreme heat of the low grounds, to the coldness of the summits clad in almost perpetual snow. The winter on the coast is so mild, that the orange, date, banana, and other delicate trees flourish in the open air; and it appears equally extraordinary and picturesque to a European to behold at Tripoli under his windows, in the month of January, orange trees loaded with flowers and fruit, while the lofty head of Lebanon is covered with ice and snow. Syria then owes to her mountains the advantage of uniting different climates under the same sky, and of collecting, within a narrow compass, pleasures and productions which nature has elsewhere widely dispersed as to time and place. With us, for instance, seasons are separated by months; there we may say they are only separated by hours. If in Seyde, Beyroot, or Tripoli we are incommoded by the heats of July, in six hours we are in the neighbouring mountains in the temperature of March; or, on the other hand, if chilled by the frosts of December at Bsherray, a day's journey brings us back to the coast amid the flowers of May. The Arabian poets have therefore said, that "the Sunnin bears Winter on his head, Spring upon his shoulders, and Autumn in his bosom, while Summer lies sleeping at his feet." Sandys speaks of "the snowtopped mountains of the Antilebanus, so exceedingly cold, that a Moor at our being here (at Seyde), returning from Damascus in company with an English merchant, perished by the way; the heat then excessively great on both sides." Volney too, who resided eight months at the monastery of Mar Hanna, seven leagues from Beyroot, testifies from personal experience to the truth of the above beautiful poetic figure. "At the end of February," he says, "I left at Tripoli a variety of vegetables in perfection, and many flowers in full bloom. On my arrival at Antoura, (in the Kesrouan,) I found the plants only beginning to shoot; and, at Mar Hanna, everything was covered with snow. It had not entirely left the Sunnin till the end of April, and already, in the valley it overlooks, roses had begun to bud. The early figs were past at Beyroot, when they were first gathered with us, and the silk worms had spun their cocoons before our mulberry trees were half stripped."

It is a common notion that Syria is a very hot country, but we see that this can only be admitted under considerable limitations. From the 1st of April till the end of July the climate of Beyroot is delightful; in April and May the thermometer is rarely above 80°; in June and July the heat is still endurable, and it is only in August and September that it becomes really oppressive. But with the setting in of the autumnal rains begins a second spring. We have already seen in Lamartine's description what a November day is on the coast. With the exception of a few squalls at sea, and a few showers about noon, the climate is as fine as that of our early summer. The terrace walls of Lebanon and the fruitful undulations around Beyroot become in a few days completely embedded in vegetation, so that the ground is entirely hidden under an accumulation of moss, herbs, flowers, and creepers; the young barley forms a complete carpet over the fields that before had been scorched and dusty; and the mulberry trees shooting forth their second

crop of leaves, form round the buildings forests of shades impenetrable to the sun.

The following table showing the mean temperature of Beyroot, and of B'Hamdoon, one of the highest villages of Lebanon, is derived from the observations of Dr. Kerns, the resident physician appointed by the Syrian Medical Aid Society:

	BEYROOT.					B'HAMDOON.			
	Morning.	Noon.	Evening.	Highest at Noon.	Lowest at Noon.	Morning.	Noon.	Evening.	Hottest Day.
April, 1842 . .	65	72	66	86					
May	71	77	72	89					
June	73	78	75	87					
July	79	86	82	94		72	75	73	78
August	83	89	84	97		65	71	70	84
September . . .	80	87	83	95		69	73	72	83
October	79	84	81	91		62	70	69	82
November . . .	65	71	64	77					
December . . .	59	64	61	76	57				
January, 1843 . .	54	63	58	70	54				
February . . .	57	67	58	75	59				

This climate is certainly entitled on the whole to be considered a healthy one. The English, at least, have no reason to complain of it. "During the whole summer," says Mr. Kinnear (August 26, 1839), "we have been unvisited by any contagious disease until about a month ago; and the fever which then appeared was, singularly enough, confined to the French residents." He states, too, that every case of intermittent fever among the English residents that came to his knowledge, might be traced to some imprudence of their own, sleeping in the open air during the rainy season, riding in wet clothes, or some other want of caution in their mode of living. It is a question deserving of serious consideration, whether patients suffering under pulmonary or other complaints would not do well to seek the renovation of their health in the genial atmosphere of these regions rather than in the South of France and Italy, where the harsh winds are often fatal to the invalid. It is now but too notorious that this latter experiment has many times been tried not merely without advantage, but with positively evil results. There is something like the sound of a knell in the physician's mandate despatching the sick pilgrim to scenes where so many before him have sought for health, and found a grave: but travelling to Syria is going to "fresh fields and pastures new." There the sufferer has not constantly before his imagination the phantoms of numberless victims, his predecessors in the same hopeless career, to cast the shadow of death upon a being already depressed in mind by disease and loneliness, and pining after the familiar sights, and sounds, and faces, he may perhaps never meet again. There, on the contrary, everything around him is novel and hopeful; a thousand objects of interest solicit his attention, amuse his fancy, and beguile him from brooding over his unhappy condition. "Beyroot," says a medical authority, "offers many inducements to the travelling invalid, or to families desiring to visit Syria, and would, I doubt not, form a pleasant and healthy

residence for such persons. Its climate is moderate and subject to less change than either Algiers or Alexandria; and the vicinity of mountains affords the means of varying the temperature. There are many European residents here; and there is constant and direct communication with England by trading vessels and the government steam-boat, which arrives at Beyroot once a month. With Egypt there is daily communication; Balbeck is but forty miles distant; the interesting country of the Druses is just in the vicinity; a visit to the cedars of Lebanon forms an entertaining excursion to the tourist, and the Cave of St. George a pleasant morning's walk."*

As for the natives of the country they are a peculiarly healthy, robust race, and many of them are possessed of great muscular strength. It is no uncommon thing to see a porter on the *marina* of Beyroot walk away with a bale of cotton twist, weighing 600 lbs., on his shoulders. Much of the illness among the native population arises, not so much from the climate as from the excessive quantity of unripe fruit and raw vegetables eaten by the common people. Most of their vegetables—the *kooseh*, a small pumpkin, about three inches long, the *bamiyeh*, the pod of the hibiscus, and the *badingan*, the fruit of the egg-plant—are both agreeable and wholesome when cooked; but all of them are eaten raw by the common people and children, during the hottest season, and when every kind of fruit is abundant. The water melon, which is imported in large quantities from Jaffa, is a most delicious fruit; but after being kept a few days it acquires a sharp acid flavour, and when cut and exposed to the air it begins to ferment. The better class of people buy them fresh from the boats, or soon after their arrival; but in the bazaars where they are sold to the lower classes, they are cut into slices and remain exposed to the sun, and covered with flies, and must almost invariably be eaten in a state of fermentation. The prickly pear, which abounds in the neighbourhood of Beyroot, is also eaten in great quantities, and is thought to be wholesome enough; but it is really fearful to see the number which an Arab will swallow one after another. He seats himself beside the basket, and as fast as the seller can open and remove the prickly rind, he bolts the fruit, apparently without any mastication; and after he has swallowed a dozen or two, he wipes his mouth, says, El am doo lillah, "Praise be to Allah," and rising slowly, walks off to his work.†

Lebanon is a region to interest the poet, the philosopher, and the politician; the first finds there an epitome of the marvels of the East, magnificent scenery revealing inexpressible beauties at every point, ways of life as simple and unsophisticated as those recorded in the book of Genesis, and teeming with images and traditions of the primitive ages. To the second there is presented a strange agglomeration of creeds and customs, an endless variety of moral, intellectual, and religious idiosyncrasies, suggesting valuable lessons for the study of human nature. The third, the politician, looking narrowly into the character of the three hundred thousand Maronites and Druses who inhabit this region, will quickly perceive to what prodigious effects such a population might be made instrumental in the hands of able lawgivers. There is not perhaps a spot on earth better adapted for mountain independence than is Lebanon. Defined on every side by steep and

* Wilde, Excursions, &c. † Kinnear, Cairo, Petra and Damascus.

lofty barriers—laved along its principal extent by the waves of the ocean—ascending in successive and distinct mountains to heights where from the nature of the ground every inch of rock may be contested—containing within its limits innumerable plateaux, covered with a deep and most fertile soil, with abundance of pure water, and rejoicing in a heavenly climate—it would seem created by the hand of Nature as a stronghold against the oppressor.*

Lebanon is inhabited by three principal races, the Maronite Christians, the Druses, and the Metualis, who until the year 1840 formed a federal community under one prince or Emir. All the northern part, that is to say the cantons of the Kesrouan and Bsherray, is inhabited almost exclusively by the Maronites. Within the former district, which includes an extent of ten miles only, to the northward of the Dog River, there are 150,000 Maronites. The Druses occupy the mountain from the river Damour, between Beyroot and Seyde, as far as the latitude of the mouth of the Kasmieh, in towns and villages either solely pertaining to them or which they share with Christians,—Maronites, Greeks, &c. A small number of Metuali villages are found in the extreme southern part of Lebanon, towards the Cape of Sarfend or Sarepta.

Horseman of Lebanon.

In point of costume the mountain tribes do not differ essentially from each other. The dress of the male Druses is simple, consisting of a coarse woollen frock, without sleeves, of black with white stripes descending to the knees. The under garment is a long tunic (kombaz) of linen, with sleeves reaching to the wrist. The trousers are of the same stuff, gathered in below the knee and falling in folds half way down the leg. A sash of white or red cotton or silk, with fringed ends, tied round the waist, supports a brace of pistols, a dirk and a powder-flask; a musket and cartridge-box are slung across the shoulders. A broad turban, flat on the top, swells out from the head, shading their bronzed visages and coal-black eyes, and adding to the grandeur and wild energy of their features. Their beards are shaved off, but long mustachios cover their lips, and hang down on each side of the mouth. This is the uniform costume of all the Druses except the emirs and the *akhoul* or initiated: the former dress like Turks of rank; the latter wear garments of the same form as their uninitiated brethren, but the colours are exclusively white or black, and they carry no weapons.

The Maronites are more gay in their attire. Their turbans of various forms, are of every colour except the forbidden green, the sacred colour of the Muslims. They sometimes wear the striped abbas of the Druses, but

* Poujoulat, Correspondance d'Orient. Hunter, Expedition to Syria.

more generally a short red jacket over a party-coloured vest: embroidery of silk or gold cord is not spared by those who have the means of procuring such finery; and their crimson and yellow sashes sustain a little portable armoury of silver-mounted khanjars, yataghans, and pistols.

The usual apparel of the women, both Maronite and Druse, consists of an outer pelisse, generally blue, and fringed with silk cord: it is open in front, and has sleeves to the elbow; under this is another robe, with sleeves open to the wrist: a shawl round the waist, long and full trousers, with painted toes or yellow slippers, complete the costume. But the most remarkable peculiarities of their dress are the immense silver ear-rings hanging forward on the neck, the large bell-shaped silver bobs they wear upon their long plaits of hair, and above all the tantoor.

Maronite Sheikh and his Wife.

The tantoor is a tube of gold, silver, or even tin, according to the wealth of the wearer, measuring in size from the diameter of an inch and a half at the smaller extremity, to three inches at the other, where it terminates like the mouth of a trumpet. If the smaller end were closed, it might serve for a drinking cup; and in Germany glasses of the same form and size are still occasionally used. In some villages the tantoor is a gilded buffalo's horn. But whatever be the material, this ornament is the peculiar and distinguished sign of the matron condition. Maidens are never allowed to wear the honoured emblem, (at least among the Druses,) with certain rare exceptions in favour of those belonging to important families; and those privileged young ladies wear their horns "with a difference," so that no native can mistake them for married women. The broad end of the tantoor is fixed to a pad on the top of the head by two silk cords, which, after being wound round the head, hang behind nearly to the ground, terminating in large tassels, that among the better classes are capped with silver. The narrow end commonly projects over the forehead at an angle of 45°, like the horn of an unicorn, and in this position it might indeed serve as a formidable weapon of offence. But the mode of wearing it is subject to endless variations; it points forwards, backwards, directly upwards, to the right or to the left: its shape too is no less diversified; sometimes it assumes the form of a truncated cone five or six inches long; sometimes of two such figures joined at their narrow ends; sometimes it is in the shape of a funnel, more than a foot long, projecting from the side of the head, with the broad end outwards, and looking like a very large hearing-trumpet. All these diversities afford so many distinctive marks, by which a person familiar with

the country and its customs, can at once determine to what district or faction belongs the husband of any woman he meets.

This grotesque accoutrement, which is not laid aside even at night, has a very disfiguring effect. The best that can be said for it is, that it supports the veil and prevents it from encumbering the face; but it gives a very ungainly stiffness to the motions of the head and neck. It is certainly the most singular, inconvenient, and inexplicable costume ever worn by human being, — except, perhaps, the long wig of our ancestors. Its weight, and that of the heavy tassels or metal balls attached to the silk cords in order to counterpoise it, make the wearers peculiarly subject to severe headaches. The headdress of the unmarried girls, who have not attained the privilege of thus burthening and disfiguring themselves, is very becoming, and the whole coquetry of the veil, like that of the Spanish mantilla, admirably adapted for manslaughter.

Maronite Maidens.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Maronites—The Kesrouan.

The *ferdehs* levied by the Emir Beshir in his latter years afford us the means of making a very close approximation to the numbers of the several tribes in Lebanon. The ferdeh, or capitation tax, was paid by all males between the ages of fifteen and sixty. The returns for 1839 and 1840 were as follow:

Ferdehs	77,589	paid by the	Maronites.
	18,321	„	Druses.
	8,029	„	Catholic and Schismatic Greeks.
	2,917	„	Mussulmans settled in a few towns,
	2,311	„	Metualis. (The Metualis are not confined to Lebanon.)
	575	„	Jews.
	211	„	*Zéuts*, schismatic Druses.
	360	„	Nauer Arabs or wandering Gipsies.

Total 110,313 individuals paying poll tax in Lebanon.

If, then, we take into account the sheikhs and the clergy exempted from the ferdeh, amounting to the number of 7000 or 8000, we find that the

male Maronite population of Lebanon between the ages of fifteen and sixty consists of 85,000 individuals. Hence, supposing that two out of every five individuals are males between the above ages, the Maronites alone form a population of 210,000 or 220,000 souls, and their numbers are daily tending to increase.

The Maronites derive their name from Marroun, a holy hermit, who flourished in the odour of sanctity in the fifth century. But his followers were condemned by the general council of Constantinople (A. D. 681) as holding the *monothelite* heresy; and, being driven from the greater part of the cities of Syria, they took refuge on the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-lebanon. For several successive centuries from that period Lebanon continued to be an asylum from religious persecution of every caste. By no other means can we account for the fact of Pagan and Christian amalgamating for so long a series of ages, and submitting to be governed even by a single head.

And still is Lebanon one vast city of refuge. The stranger, pursued by implacable enemies, the Christians of the plain, unable to endure the cruel oppression and extortions of the Turkish governors, fly to the mountain, and neither private malice, nor the tyranny of the rulers, will venture to seek them there. In 1821, when the disasters of Navarino had excited the intensest hatred in the bosom of the Turks against every thing European, the consuls and the Franks resident in Syria, alarmed for the safety of their lives, sought an asylum among the inhabitants of Lebanon; and during a space of fifteen or eighteen months passed by them in that region, never did the least shadow of danger trouble their tranquillity: the hospitable Lebanon keeps trusty guard over those who confide in its protection. By what a noble instinct, by what an admirable law not written in human books, do the mountaineers thus devote themselves to the defence of the fugitive and the oppressed! "Thanks be to God for the mountains!"

The Maronites adhered to the Latin Church in the year 1182, but still remained under the authority of their own patriarchs. In the course of the events that followed the crusades their attachment to the church of Rome became much diminished; but they were won back to it by able negotiations in the year 1403; and in 1445 the Maronites solemnly renewed their recognition of Roman supremacy under the pontificate of Eugenius IV. Thenceforth they have always piqued themselves on their strict fidelity to the holy see, which in its turn has favoured them with many immunities. Thus celibacy is not strictly imposed on the Maronite priests, who may be ordained though married, but must not take a second wife if the first die. Only the higher clergy and the monks, and those who are unmarried when they take orders, are compelled to remain single.

They celebrate mass in Syriac, of which the greatest part of them comprehend not a word. The gospel alone is read aloud in Arabic, that it may be understood by the people. The communion is administered in both kinds. The host is a small round loaf, unleavened, of the thickness of a finger, and about the size of a crown-piece. On the top is the impression of a seal, which is eaten by the priest, who cuts the remainder into small pieces, and putting it into the wine in the cup, administers to each person with a spoon, which serves the whole congregation.

The Maronites constitute at this day a community governed by the most purely theocratical system that has withstood the changes of time; a theocracy which, having constantly had the fear of Muslim tyranny impending over it, has of necessity a character of moderation and paternal tenderness towards the governed, so that it has fostered among them some germs of civil liberty, which need only a more favourable season to unfold themselves. The patriarch (*batrak*) is elected by the bishops of the nation, subject to the approval of the pope or of his legate. The patriarch's authority is unlimited; all the Christians of the mountain pay him extraordinary respect and deference. He has but to speak and be obeyed implicitly, and that even in matters not pertaining to his spiritual functions. The influence of the numerous bishops is also very great, and the Turkish authorities are careful to avoid offending them, knowing that a word from their lips would be enough to rouse the whole population.

The bishops are possessed of stated revenues, that enable them to live in comparative affluence: but this is not the case with the inferior clergy, who have no fixed sources of income, but subsist on the produce of their masses, the bounty of their congregations, and the labours of their hands. Some of them exercise trades; others cultivate small plots of land; and all are industriously employed for the maintenance of their families and the edification of their flocks. This poverty is recompensed by the great respect that is paid to them; their vanity is incessantly flattered; whoever approaches them, whether rich or poor, great or small, is anxious to kiss their hands, which they fail not to present; nor are they pleased that Europeans withhold from them this mark of reverence.

It is perhaps to the potent influence of the clergy that we must attribute the mild and simple manners generally prevailing among the Maronites; for violent crimes are extremely rare among them. Retribution immediately follows every offence, however slight, and the clergy are rigorous in preventing every appearance of disorder or scandal among the members of their flocks. Before a young man can marry, he must obtain the consent of his pastor and of his bishop. If they disapprove of the marriage, they prohibit it, and the Maronite has no remedy. If an unmarried girl become a mother, her seducer is compelled to marry her, whatever be the inequality of their conditions; if he refuses, he is reduced to obedience by measures of severity, fasting, imprisonment, and even bastinadoing. This influence of the clergy extends to every detail of civil and domestic life. The Maronite who should appeal from the decision of the clergy to the civil authority of the emirs would not be listened to by them, and the act would be regarded by the appellant's bishop as a transgression to be visited with condign punishment.

The clergy have at their command a fearful word of execration, a word that excites unbounded horror whenever it is uttered; but its application is rare. This word, applied to an individual, would instantly bar every door against him; he would find himself everywhere cut off from all social intercourse, for no one would have any communication with him, or give or sell anything to an *accursed one* like him. This word, the more terrible, inasmuch as the explanation of its import is always left to the imagination of the

mountaineer, is *fra-massoon*, a corruption of *franc-maçon* (freemason). A Christian of Lebanon believes in his heart, that a freemason is a horrible being, whose soul is devoted to irretrievable perdition, who has daily dealings with Satan, who is endowed with a thousand infernal qualities, and possesses a thousand atrocious means of working mischief, of casting malignant spells, inflicting diseases on the faithful, making them succumb to temptation, and dragging them down along with himself to the bottomless pit.

Besides a numerous secular clergy, Lebanon possesses more than 10,000 monks, distributed through 200 convents. A part of these are Armenians, united and schismatic Greeks, &c., but more than two-thirds are Maronites. We have already seen in what manner these men pass their simple and laborious lives. Their ignorance, it must be owned, is great, but at least they are not rapacious drones or beggars; and even were positive testimony wanting, we might well acquit them of the vices that grow rank among the lazy pampered brotherhoods of some European countries.

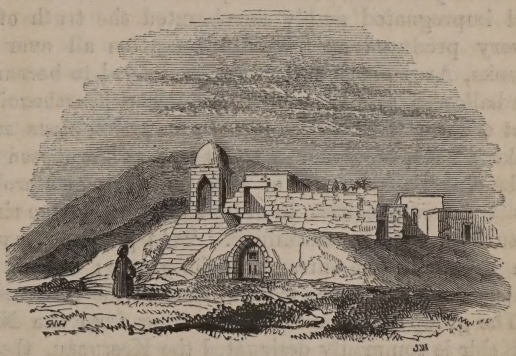
Greek Monk.

The laity may be considered as divided into two classes—the common people and the sheikhs; the latter, deriving their superiority from the antiquity of their families, or from their wealth, answer, in some degree, to our English notions of the class of country gentlemen. The whole nation consists of husbandmen. Every man cultivates with his own hands the little domain he owns or farms. Even the sheikhs live in the same manner, and are only distinguished from the rest by the display of a dress somewhat better than common, and the possession of a horse, and of some slight advantages in food and lodging. They all live frugally, without many enjoyments, but also with few wants, as they are little acquainted with the inventions of luxury. In general the nation is poor, but no one wants necessaries; and if beggars are sometimes seen, they come rather from the sea-coast than from the country itself. Property is as sacred among them as in Europe. Travellers may journey through their mountains, and through those of the Druses, by night or day, with a security unknown in any other part of the empire; and the stranger is hospitably received, though not, it must be owned, with the same open-handed liberality as among the Arabs.

Of all other denominations of men in Syria, whatever be the creed, sect, or country of the stranger, he is sure of kind treatment the moment he has touched the threshold of the door, or taken his seat beneath the tent. They fulfil to the letter the excellent precept of the sunnit: "The first law of hospitality is to refrain from asking a stranger from what region he comes, or in what faith he has been reared; but he must be asked is he hungry, is

he thirsty, is he clothed." Among the Maronites, hospitality is not so unlimited. Their coreligionist will be received with delight as a friend and a brother; but the distrust instilled by the priest into the minds of his flock against all who are not of the Roman communion, the zeal with which he labours to preserve them from the contagion of heretics or infidels, generally prevent a stranger belonging to a nation not Catholic from being well received among them. If he be not the bearer of precise orders, or of a firman from the pasha, he will sometimes have much difficulty in finding where to lay his head, unless he at once introduces himself, on dismounting from his horse, as a professor of the Catholic faith.

In point of faith the Maronite has a huge stomach and wondrous powers of digestion. Not content with having at his own doors, or at a little distance from them, in his native mountains, places regarded with profound but reasonable veneration by the whole Christian world, he dwells with credulous delight on a multitude of traditions and pious legends, many of which are at least destitute of foundation, and some highly ridiculous. If we are to believe him, saints, prophets, and patriarchs without number have rendered his native mountains illustrious as the scene of their holy labours, and have chosen there their place of burial. We will mention two instances of these curious legends; the first we give is current among the Turks as well as among the Maronites:—



Supposed Tomb of Noah.

About two miles east of Zakhle, in the village of Kerak, not far from which, on the last declivity of Lebanon, there is a round mosque. This is erected over still older relics, which are held in great reverence by Muslims and Christians, as being the reputed tomb of the patriarch Noah. The structure is evidently the remains of an ancient aqueduct, but popular credulity has invested it with a character of eminent sanctity; walls have been built round it, and at a certain season of the year the Maronites, in particular, perform pilgrimages to visit it. In his old age, they relate, Noah entreated of God, as a peculiar favour, that he might be allowed to end his days on Mount Lebanon, and there to prepare his place of sepulture. The patriarch's prayer was granted; but shortly before his death he committed some transgression, and God cut off a part of his tomb, by severing a huge mass from the mountain Noah had chosen. He could not be buried at full length, and it was necessary to double his legs under his thighs, to fit his remains to their diminished bed. Now, this so-called tomb is at least sixty feet long.

Among the gorges of the little barren mountain of Abarou, a day's journey

from Deir el Kammar, there is a spot whither the Maronites repair in numerous small parties with extreme secrecy, to venerate the tomb of Moses, the law-giver of the Jews. The discovery of this sacred tomb is thus recounted: In the year 1655, some Maronite herdsmen, who were keeping their flocks on the mountain, frequently found the tale of their goats defective. The missing animals would return after one or two days' absence, but, to the great surprise of their keepers, they always brought back with them a delicious perfume, which they retained for a long while. Curious to ascertain the cause of such a prodigy, the men one day followed the goats that were in the habit of straying from the flock; and, after many devious wanderings through broken glens and over precipices, they lost sight of the goats near a cavern, the entrance to which was closely screened by thick masses of foliage. The men boldly entered the cavern after the goats, and immediately recognised the admirable odour that had previously so much perplexed them. They found, in the middle of the cave, a tomb, constructed of unhewn stone, and covered with a marble slab, that gave forth a dazzling lustre, and bore this inscription, *Moosa Cadam Allah!—Moses the servant of God.* Quitting the sacred spot, they made all haste to Kanobin, to communicate what they had seen to the patriarch. The odour with which they were still impregnated amply corroborated the truth of their report. This discovery produced an immense sensation all over the mountain. Latins, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, all longed to become exclusive possessors of the hallowed sepulchre of Moses. The heartburnings, intrigues, and broils that ensued, were carried to such an acrimonious and scandalous pitch, that Bekir Pasha, Governor of Damascus, at last caused the entrance to the tomb to be closed with a wall of solid masonry, and prohibited all approach to it, under severe penalties, in order to take from the rival factions all pretext for disturbing public tranquillity. "At present," say the Maronites, "all that can be seen is the entrance to the grotto; but, at a certain season, a balmy atmosphere still issues from it, despite the thickness of the wall."

The group of mountains extending from the Nahr-el-Kelb to the Nahr-el-Kebir is commonly designated the Kesrouan, though Burckhardt confines this appellation to a much more limited district north of the former river, extending about three hours and a half in length from north to south, and from two to three hours in breadth. The principal and almost sole produce being silk, mulberry-trees are the chief growth of the soil; wheat and barley are sown, but not in sufficient quantity for the consumption of the people. The loom is of course an indispensable article of furniture in every house, and the manner of plying it is singular enough; the weaver sits in a hole sunk in the earthen floor. A man's wealth is estimated by the number of rotolas of silk which he makes, and the annual taxes paid to the government are calculated and apportioned on the same principle. The *miri* or land-tax is taken upon the mule-load of mulberry-leaves, eight or ten trees in common years yielding one load. The custom, before the late armed interference of the allied powers, was for the Turks to exact one or two *miris* annually, by way of tribute, from the grand prince of the mountain, who, on his part, levied the same upon the inhabitants, besides several others on his own account. But despite the complaints long made by the Maronites respecting

the taxes extorted from them, these were not to be compared in amount with those paid by the inhabitants of France or England. It is not the mere amount of taxation that crushes the energies of a nation, but its arbitrary character, and the irregularity with which it is imposed. If the taxes were legally determined, and their proportion fixed in the Turkish empire, their pressure would scarcely be felt; but the first element of national wealth is wanting, where no law secures the rights of property, or defines the extent of the claims to which it is liable. In Lebanon the amount to be paid by each individual is determined by the several village sheikhs; and it may well be imagined that a part of the sums raised sticks to the fingers of the collectors.*

But after all, the condition of this people is essentially happy. Its rulers fear it, and dare not establish themselves in its provinces: its religion is free and respected; its churches and its convents crown the summits of its hills; its bells, that sound in its ears as a welcome token of liberty and independence, peal their summons to prayer night and day: it is governed by its own hereditary chieftains and by the clergy it loves; a strict but equitable system of police preserves order and security in the villages; property is respected, and transmitted from father to son; commerce is active; the manners of the people perfectly simple and pure. Rarely is there seen a population whose appearance more bespeaks health, native nobility, and civilisation than that of these men of Lebanon. Education, though limited to reading, writing, arithmetic, and the catechism, is universal among them, and gives them a deserved superiority over the other tribes of Syria.

But though the ability to read and write be thus general among the Maronites, it must not be inferred that they are a literary people. Far from it: the booklearning of all classes, both clergy and laity, can hardly be rated too low. There are native printing presses at work in some of the monasteries, but the sheets they issue are all of an ecclesiastical kind—chiefly portions of the scripture or mass books in Syriac, which few even of the clergy understand, though they repeat them by rote. The ignorance respecting even the most ordinary subjects of thought, which is to be found in some of the more retired districts, is really curious. A Frenchman was asked by a Maronite, had they a moon in his country? A European woman having found her way into a village of Lebanon, some Maronite females laid violent hands on her, that they might satisfy themselves whether or not the women of Europe and those of Lebanon belong to the same species.† Lady Frances Egerton complains that, in her journey through the mountains, there was no such thing as keeping the women out of her room. "If I fastened my door, they called and knocked and battered at it, until I feared that it would yield to their efforts; and this at five o'clock in the morning, whilst I was in bed, as well as at other times. If the door was left a moment unfastened, then they flocked in. If I did not admit them, then they peeped through every crevice, and I was obliged to bolster up the door with cushions and curtains. It is sad that in a country where the men are particularly well bred and even polished in their manners, and where they are never intrusive or troublesome, the women should be in so degraded

* Burckhardt. Lamartine. † Poujoulat Corresp. d'Orient.

and inferior a state. In fact, until they are educated, and permitted to mix with the men, this country never can attain a proper degree of civilisation."

It must be stated, as some excuse for the conduct of these inquisitive daughters of Lebanon, that a real Chinese lady, little slipper and all, could hardly be a rarer spectacle on Snowdon or Ben Nevis than an English lady, fashionably dressed, must have appeared in the Maronite highlands. Besides, it was generally reported through the mountains that her ladyship was no less a personage than the Queen of England. Now, if rudely pressing upon and staring at a queen be deemed a decisive proof of barbarianism, what is to be said of the civilisation of some people nearer home?

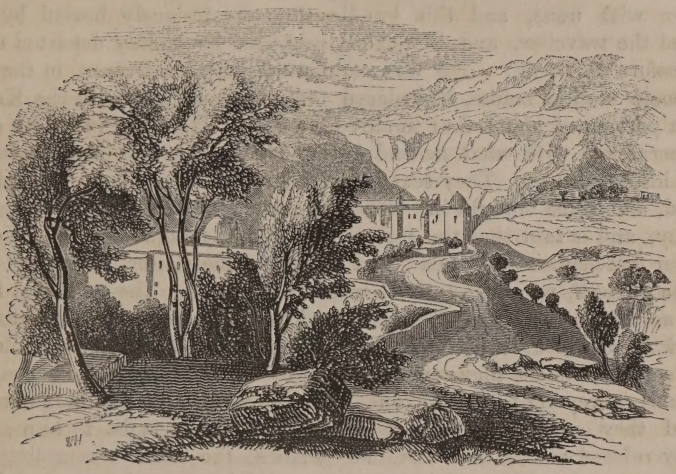
Speaking of that smaller district to which he limits the name of the Kesrouan, Burckhardt says—"The roads in the mountains are bad beyond description; indeed, I never before saw any inhabited country so entirely mountainous as the Kesrouan: there are no levels on the tops of the mountains; but the traveller no sooner arrives on the summit than he immediately begins the descent; each hill is insulated; so that to reach a place not more than ten miles distant in a straight line, one is obliged to travel three or four miles, by descending into the valley and ascending again on the other side. There is hardly any place in Syria less fit for cultivation than the Kesrouan, yet it has become the most populous part of the country."

These mountains are covered with monasteries built in the style of the Florentine villas of the middle ages. Eighteen of them have been counted from a single point overhanging the Nahr el Kelb. A village is set on each knoll, crowned by a forest of broad topped pines, and watered by a torrent that flings itself over the cliff in a sparkling cascade. The coast is indented with a countless number of small creeks, filled with fishing boats. Terrace rows of vineyards, barley, and mulberries, descend from the villages to the sea. The belfries of the convents and churches rise above the dark verdure of the fig and cypress; a white sandy beach lies between the foot of the mountains and the blue transparent waves. There is here a tract of country some six or seven miles long, that might deceive the eye of the traveller, did he forget that he had left Europe behind him. He might fancy himself on the borders of the lake of Geneva, between Lausanne and Vevay; only the frame work of the picture is more majestic, and when he looks up he sees the snowy summits of the Sunnin cleaving the sky like the forked tongues of a conflagration.

Terrace Roof of the Greek Convent of Mar Elias.

There are several convents of nuns in the Kesrouan, as, for instance, the con-

vent at Antoura, opposite that of the French lazarists. One of the superiors and two of the sisters are Ethiopian negresses. The convent of the Kourkeh,



Convents of Antoura.

or Bekerke, in this vicinity, is memorable as having been founded by the notorious Hendye, the romantic history of whose crimes is related by Volney.

She was a young Maronite damsel, whose extraordinary way of life attracted general attention, about the year 1755. She fasted, wore haircloth, had the gift of tears; everybody looked on her as a model of piety, and many esteemed her a saint. It was but one step more to a reputation for working miracles; and, in fact, a rumour of this kind was soon spread. Availing herself of this general enthusiasm, Hendye aspired to be the foundress of a new order. To build a convent funds were necessary. The foundress appealed to the piety of her partisans, and offerings poured in to so large an amount, that in a few years she was enabled to erect two large mansions of hewn stone, the construction of which must have cost 5000*l*. The Kourkeh was soon peopled with monks and nuns. The patriarch for the time being was the director-general. Other offices, great and small, were conferred on divers priests and candidates, who were established in one of the houses.

For a long while, everything went on as well as possible. It is true that many nuns died; but the blame was laid upon the air, and it was difficult to imagine the real cause. Hendye reigned over her little kingdom for nearly twenty years, when an unforeseen accident threw everything into confusion. A factor travelling from Damascus to Beyroot in the summer was overtaken by night near this convent; the gates were shut, the hour unseasonable; and as he did not wish to give trouble, he contented himself with a bed of straw, and laid himself down in the outer court, waiting the return of day. He had only slept a few hours, when he was awakened by a sudden noise of doors and bolts. From one of the doors issued three women with spades and shovels in their hands, who were followed by two men bearing a long white bundle that appeared very heavy. They proceeded towards an adjoining

piece of ground full of stones and rubbish, where the men deposited their load, dug a hole, into which they put it, and covering it with earth, trod it down with their feet, after which they all returned to the house. The sight of men with nuns, and this bundle thus mysteriously buried by night, amazed the traveller, and in anxiety and fear, he hastily departed to Beyroot before daybreak. He was acquainted with a merchant in that town, who some months before, had placed two of his daughters in the Kourkeh, with a portion of about four hundred pounds. He went in search of him, still perplexed with what he had seen, but burning with impatience to recount his adventure. They seat themselves cross-legged, the long pipes are lighted, and coffee brought in. The merchant makes inquiries respecting his journey, and is told that the traveller passed the night near the Kourkeh. Further particulars are asked; and at length the visitor, no longer able to contain himself, whispers his host what he had seen. The merchant listened with surprise; one of his daughters he knew was ill, and he could not but remark that a great many nuns died. Tormented with these thoughts, and the dismal suspicions they occasioned, he mounts his horse, and accompanied by his friend repairs to the convent, where he asks to see his daughters. He is told they are sick. He insists they shall be brought to him; this is angrily refused; and the more he persists, the more peremptory is the refusal, till at last his suspicions are converted into certainty. Leaving the convent in an agony of despair, he went to Deir el Kammar, and laid all the circumstances before Saad, *Kiaya*, or minister of Prince Yousef, chief of the mountain, who ordered a body of horse to accompany him, and if refused admission, to break into the convent by force. The cadi also took part with the merchant: the ground where the bundle had been buried was opened, and a dead body found, which the unhappy father discovered to be that of his youngest daughter; the other was found confined in the convent and almost dead. She revealed a scene of such abominable wickedness as almost petrified the hearers, and to which she, like her sister, was about to fall a victim. The pretended saint being seized, acted her part with great firmness; and a prosecution was begun against the priests and the patriarch. The latter was suspended and deposed. The affair was brought to Rome in 1776; the Propaganda instituted an inquiry, and discovered scenes of the most infamous profligacy, and the most horrible cruelty. It was proved that Hendye destroyed her nuns, sometimes to get their property into her hands, at other times because they were not submissive to her will; that this infamous woman not only communicated, but even consecrated the host and said mass; that she had holes under her bed, by which perfumes were introduced at the moment she pretended to be in ecstasy, and under the influence of the Holy Ghost; that she had a faction that cried her up, and gave out that she was the mother of God returned to earth, and a thousand other extravagances. Notwithstanding all this, she retained a party powerful enough to prevent the severe punishment she merited. She was shut up in several convents, from which she frequently managed to escape. In 1783, she was at the visitation of Antoura, and the Emir of the Druses interested himself in her behalf. She died in the year 1802, at the age of seventy—a hypocrite to the very last; and such was the rigour of her penances and mortification, that the Maronites to this day revere her as a saint.

CHAPTER IX.

ROUTE TO TRIPOLI AND THE CEDARS.—SUPERSTITIONS—FESTIVITIES.—MARONITE WEDDINGS.

WE* set out from Beyroot at four o'clock on the morning of April 13, and skirted the coast as far as Gebail or Byblos, through localities already described, crossing the Nahr Ibrahim in our way. This river, like the Nahr-el-Kelb, issues from a deep chasm of the mountains. It is the ancient Adonis; and Maundrell was so fortunate as to see what may be supposed to have occasioned the mythological tale mentioned by Lucian, namely, that at certain seasons of the year, especially about the feast of Adonis, the river assumes the colour of blood, in sympathy for the death of the beautiful hunter, who was killed by a wild boar in the neighbouring mountains. Something like this actually occurred when Maundrell passed; "for the water was stained to a surprising redness, and, as we observed in travelling, had discoloured the sea, a great way in, to a reddish hue; occasioned, doubtless, by a sort of red earth washed into the river by the violence of the rain. The preceding night had been very tempestuous, and the rain almost incessant." As for us we looked in vain for the *anemone*, the flower that sprang from the blood of Adonis. Wild boars are still very numerous in the neighbouring mountains, and, in severe winters, commit great ravages in the plain.

"All he had loved and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Grieved for Adonis. Pallid Morning sought
Her eastern watchtower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground.
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew 'round, sobbing in their dismay.
Where are we? and why are we? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year with sorrow."

We slept that night at Gebail, in a khan outside the town, on an eminence commanding the sea. Gebail is supposed to be the ancient land of the Geblites, who furnished King Hiram with the blocks of stone intended for the building of Solomon's temple. It is now a poor fishing town, but in ancient times must have been a place of no mean extent, and of considerable beauty, as is evident from the many heaps of ruins (apparently Roman) and the fine pillars scattered about the gardens near the town. On the south side are the remains of a remarkable castle, that once was of great strength.

* Lamartine. We have taken that writer's narrative as the basis of the present chapter, but we have greatly altered and enlarged it from other sources, some of which are indicated by foot notes.

The walls are about a mile in circumference, with square towers at about every forty yards distance.

Gebail is noted for tobacco of rare excellence, produced by certain growers in the vicinity, and which was formerly monopolised, with great strictness, by the Emir Beshir for his own use. It possesses the remarkable quality of swelling to nearly thrice its original size after it has been lighted. It is not necessary to be a smoker to experience its agreeable fragrance. Its test is, that when lighted it should burn like touchwood; and on being brought near the eye, the smoke from it should not in any way occasion pain to that organ.*

On our way we fell in with a party conducting a wretched maniac, distracted with a frenzy fearful to contemplate. He was about thirty-four years of age, and very athletic; and being seated upon a mule, his legs were bound as near together under the belly as they could be brought; while his hands were tied to the saddle in front, and another rope round his body was fastened behind. The sounds he uttered were incoherent, and scarcely any words were distinctly articulated; while his eyes were constantly raised towards heaven, and his attendants applied to me for aid, hoping I was a *hakkim*. There was an expression in his countenance that betrayed an inward agony of soul, such as I have never seen even in the dungeons of Cairo and Constantinople, where the treatment of the patients might alone seem sufficient to infuriate a mind not labouring under insanity. Six men were with him, who said, that when he was not bound, they were unable to hold him. They considered him possessed with a devil, and they were taking him to the convent of St. Anthony, where the prayers of the church would be put up for him; and if these proved ineffectual, they should despair of his recovery.† As we afterwards visited that convent, we may here anticipate a little, to show what manner of exorcism is practised there.

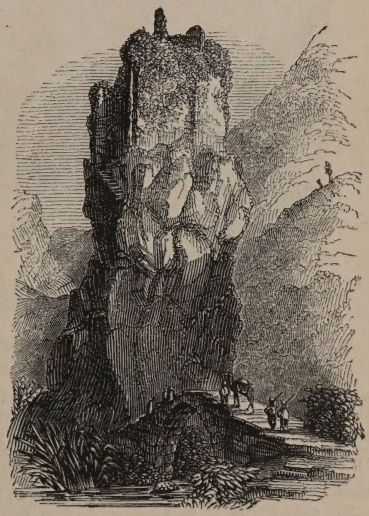
The Convent of St. Anthony seen from the entrance of the Defile.

The place is sometimes called also Bish-el-Mejeneen, from a large natural

* Hunter. † Monro.

cavern near it, which is famous for restoring mad people and fools to their senses. A hundred stories were told us of people who had been brought thither, and after a few days recovered: particular mention was made of a Turk from Constantinople, who did not understand a word of Arabic, but who, being sent to this place by his friends, remained ten days, and went away sane, though unconverted. In this cave they say St. Anthony studied and performed his penances and devotions. The insane patients are therefore placed there, chained to the rock in the dark, and kept upon bread and water until it pleases the spirit of the patron saint to come and release them by restoring them to reason. One maniac who was there at the time of our visit, wore a large iron collar, and was fastened to the rock by a chain of thirty pounds weight. He was nearly naked, and ate only bread and water; a discipline which, continued for any length of time in a dark cave like this, might possibly subdue the frenzy of a maniac, but would certainly drive the man mad who was not so already.* I have heard it somewhere affirmed, that apostates, whom they regard here as madmen, are subjected to similar treatment. It is well that missionaries should be aware of this result of their benevolent intentions.†

On the following day we continued to skirt the coast along the foot of the Kesrouan mountains, and we slept under our tents on a beautiful spot on the borders of the territory of Tripoli. The road quits the coast, and, turning abruptly to the right, enters a narrow glen watered by a stream. About a league from the coast, the glen closes in, and the opening is barred by a rock 100 feet high, and 500 or 600 feet in circumference. This rock, whether shaped by nature or cut from the side of the adjoining mountain, is surmounted by a Gothic castle, in a high state of preservation, but now the abode of the jackal and the eagle. Steps in the rock lead up, by successive ranges of terraces, to the highest platform, on which stands the donjon keep, with its ogeed windows and loopholes. Vegetation has fastened all over the castle, its battlements and towers; large sycamores have taken root in the halls, and spread their broad arms above the ruined roof; creeping plants hanging in huge festoons, ivy clinging to the windows and doors, and lichens everywhere clothing the stones, give this fine monument of the middle ages the appearance of a castle of moss and ivy. A beautiful spring gushes forth at the foot of the rock, overshadowed by three of the most splendid trees ever seen:



Kalaat Meszabeh.

* Buckingham. † Robinson, Travels in Palestine and Syria, London, 1837.

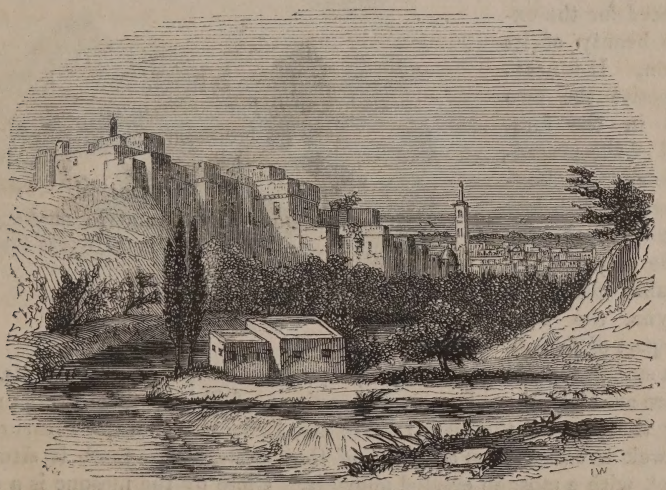
they are a species of ilex; and one of them sufficed to cover with its shade our tents, our thirty horses, and the scattered groups of Arabs. The castle was once in the possession of the Metuali, who frequently attacked the passengers in the valley.

The following day, we ascended by a steep track along a white and slippery hill, where the horses could scarcely keep their feet. From the summit we had a boundless view of all the western seaboard of Syria, as far as the Gulf of Scanderoon and Mount Casius, and a little to the right of the plains of Aleppo and the hills of Antioch, with the course of the Orontes. This promontory, now called the Ras-el-Shakkah, admits of no passage round its edge by the sea. It has a still steeper appearance from the north than from the south, rising almost perpendicularly from the sea, and being probably little less than 1000 feet in height. Strabo calls it the Face of the god, (i. e. doubtless the god of the mountain,) and he regards it as the end of Mount Lebanon, though it is nearer the midlength of the range. It is, however, by far the most prominent point which Lebanon presents to the sea, and hence the ancient mariners may have been led to give it the name they did. Three hours' journey from the promontory brought us to the gates of Tripoli.

Arab dance—Tripoli in the back ground.

Tripoli, by the Arabs called Tarabolos, is situated on one of the most favoured spots of all Syria, as the maritime plain and the neighbouring mountains place every variety of climate within reach of the inhabitants. It consisted originally, as its name imports, of three towns, formed severally by colonies from Tyre, Sidon, and Aradus, which afterwards coalesced into one. It is not washed by the sea, but lies about a mile and a half from the shore, on the side of one of the lowest spurs of Lebanon, which is surmounted by an old fortress, built, it is supposed, by Raymond de Toulouse, and commanding

the city and its environs. Though Tripoli has twelve gates, it is but partially inclosed with walls; but a circular line of houses gives it, externally, something of a fortified appearance. It retains many marks of the ages of the crusades; among them several high arcades of gothic architecture, under which the streets run. The houses are white, and generally well built; and the whole town has a light and clean appearance, and is very much embellished by the gardens, which are not only attached to the houses within it, but cover, likewise, the whole triangular plain lying between it and the sea. This space was occupied late in the last century by marshes—a prolific hotbed of malignant fevers;—their partial drainage has greatly improved the salubrity of the air. But the soul of the town is the river Kadisha, which flows through it, and constitutes its chief pretension to the proud surname its Muslim inhabitants delight to bestow upon it, namely, *Koochook Sham*—Little Damascus.



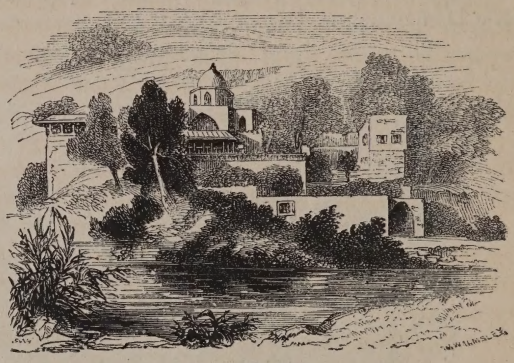
Castle and Town of Tripoli.

The Wady Kadisha, higher up than Tripoli, is one of the most picturesque valleys in the world. It is crossed half an hour above the town by an aqueduct, built on arches, called by the natives Kontaret-el-Brins—a corruption of Prince. This name, preserved by ancient tradition, and a Latin cross carved in relief on one of the arches, corroborate the belief that the aqueduct was constructed by the counts of Tripoli, in the times of the crusades. It receives in a channel, two feet deep, a rapid brook, which issues from the neighbourhood of the village of Sgorta, eight miles up the mountain, and discharges itself into a subterraneous conduit, by which it is conveyed to Tripoli: the inhabitants prefer its water to that of the Kadisha. The aqueduct is 130 paces long, and seven feet eight inches broad: it may well be imagined that even a pedestrian feels some trepidation at crossing it, along the narrow unguarded ledge not occupied by the water: yet it is related, that, in 1802, a Maronite, belonging to one of the chief families of Lebanon,

being hotly pursued by the soldiers of the governor of Tripoli, galloped his horse across the aqueduct at full speed.

In the time of the crusaders there was another aqueduct, separated only by a narrow road from the sea: its site is probably indicated by the name—Borj-el-Kanatter—Tower of the Aqueduct—still given to one of a chain of six towers extending along the shore, at a distance of ten minutes' walk from each other, between the Marina and the mouth of the Kadisha. Raymond d'Agile, one of the old chroniclers, speaking of a battle fought at Tripoli between the Crusaders and the Saracens, says, coolly, that it was a delectable thing to see the little stream of the aqueduct carrying into the city mangled bodies of nobles and men of the commoner sort.

Ten minutes above the town, on the same side of the Kadisha as the castle, stands the Convent of Dervishes, so celebrated for the exquisite beauty of its situation. It is nearly opposite the two houses in the foreground of the preceding view. At half-an-hour's walk below the town, at the extreme angle of the triangular plain, is El Myna, the Marina or port of Tripoli, itself a small town, inhabited chiefly by Greek sailors or shipwrights.



Convent of Dervishes.

There are two other places in the environs of Tripoli that deserve mention among the lions of the town: these are, Bedoowek and the Treasure Cave. Bedoowek is called from a sheikh of that name, whose tomb is situated on the spot, with a mosque erected above it. Close by the mosque is a circular basin of beautifully clear water, in which is preserved a great quantity of fish, which are daily fed by the guardians of the tomb and by the Tripolitans. We saw, perhaps, not fewer that 2000 of these fish within the circumference of less than 100 paces, some of them large enough to weigh five or six pounds. No one dares to kill one of them, for they are sacred. This is an old superstition in the East. The ancient Syrians, as is well known, had their sacred fish; and there are many places where the Mohammedans of the present day revere some fortunate members of the finny tribe, who, they say, were favourites with Abraham, and have been, in consequence, endowed with a length of days not usually granted to their race;* and it is even supposed that, under certain circumstances, they become the recipients for an appointed time of the souls of true believers.

The Treasure Cave is a grotto half-an-hour's distance from Tripoli, containing, it is said, certain old sequins, which, by some marvellous virtue, attract everything to them, and which no human power could remove from

* Ainsworth.

where they lie. The inhabitants put the most implicit faith in this prodigy; and if you express the least doubt on the subject, they will tell you a string of stories, each succeeding one more wonderful than the others, till they fairly talk down your scepticism. The *djins*, no doubt, are at the bottom of the mystery. Every reader of the "Arabian Nights" is acquainted with those tricky sprites, the djins and djiniyehs, (for they are male and female). Their existence is fully believed in at this day; how, indeed, should it be questioned, seeing the numbers of living witnesses who have had ocular demonstration of the fact? One may even enter into wedlock with these strange beings; the union endures for life; but the human consort renounces thereby all the hopes and consolations of religion. Instances are notorious in Syria of men who are married to female djins; a native Christian hakkim of Acre was mentioned to me as having contracted an alliance of this kind. When he walks through the streets the children run after him shouting "There goes the husband of the djiniyeh." This man's sister was killed by an unknown hand, for having disclosed her brother's unhallowed dealings to her confessor.*

The djins are not malicious if you take care not to offend them; but as their power is immense, and their temper capricious, the Arab regards them with extreme awe. Nothing would induce him voluntarily to pass the night in a dark room. If he had but two paras in the world he would spend them upon a little oil and cotton; for it is in the dark the djins are most terrible. The women will never venture to talk of these beings, unless when they are assembled in numbers sufficient to give them unusual confidence; two or three women alone in a room would not dare even to utter the name of djin.

It is now about fifty years since a midwife, living in Tripoli, was called up in the night to attend a lying-in woman. She obeyed the summons, and accompanying the man who called her, she entered a house unknown to her. Her guide showed her into a bath-room and then disappeared. The good woman, thus left alone, and suddenly hearing strange unaccountable noises around her, was beginning heartily to wish herself safe at home, when all at once a magnificent and brilliantly-lighted room opened before her: in it were forty women, one of whom was lying down, and appeared to require the midwife's aid. Who should know more of the world and its inhabitants than those whose lives are spent in helping to people it? The midwife saw at a glance that she was among an assembly of djiniyehs, and she wisely resolved to do her best to please them. After having assisted at the birth of the child, she set about tinging its eyelashes and eyebrows black, according to the custom of the Arabs. Possibly, her trepidation may have occasioned some awkwardness in the performance of this operation: at any rate, one of the females present came up to her, and under pretence of showing her how the surmeh should be applied, she poked out the poor woman's eye. The sufferer durst not utter a cry or make the least complaint. Soon after this, casting a glance of her remaining eye on a female near her, she recognised, to her great surprise, a pelisse, which she knew well belonged to a cousin of her own living in Tripoli. Taking

* Corresp. d'Orient.

advantage of a moment when the djiniyehs were looking another way, she stole into the bath-room, and took up a pinch of red powder, with which she furtively marked the skirt of her cousin's pelisse, in order that she might afterwards be able to assure herself of the reality of what she had seen. At last, when the djiniyehs were tired of tormenting the poor woman, they sent her away, first bestowing upon her a casket filled with gold pieces, all counted in her presence. On reaching home, the midwife made haste to open the casket, but to her dismay, she found it filled with onions. The next day she paid a visit to her cousin, upon whose back she saw, sure enough, the very pelisse that had attracted her attention during the strange scenes of the preceding night: the red spot was on the skirt. The djiniyehs had borrowed it for a night, and had brought it back before dawn. As for the midwife, she continued blind of an eye till the day of her death. A grandson of hers was pointed out to me at Tripoli.*

The sheikh of Eden, the last inhabited village on Lebanon, being apprised by his nephew of our arrival at Tripoli, came down from the mountains with his eldest son and a part of his followers, to invite me to his house at Eden. We accepted his invitation, and at five in the morning we were on horseback. The caravan, now more numerous than before, was headed by the sheikh, a venerable old man, whose elegant manners, noble and easy politeness, and splendid dress, were far from bespeaking a mere Arab chief; he seemed a patriarch marching in the van of his tribe.

The road leading out of Tripoli affords an admirable prospect. It winds along the banks of a river inclosed between two hills, and overshadowed by beautiful trees and orange groves. A kiosk, or café, built beneath these trees, offers its perfumed terrace to promenaders, who resort thither to smoke, drink coffee, and enjoy the freshness of the air, wafted from above the stream. From this spot you look through a vista upon the sea, which is half a league from the town, on the picturesque square towers along the coast, and the numerous vessels in the roads. We traversed a wide plain tilled and planted with olives. On the first acclivity, rising from this plain towards Lebanon, in the midst of a forest of olives and fruit-trees of all sorts, we encountered a great multitude of men, women, and children lining the road. They were the inhabitants of Sgorta, a large village embosomed in the forest, and belonging to the sheikh of Eden: they pass the winter in this village on the plain, and the summer in Eden. These people saluted their sheikh with great respect, and offered us refreshments, whilst some of them went with us to procure us sheep and calves, and to help us to cross the precipices. For the four following hours we proceeded sometimes in deep valleys, sometimes on the brows of almost barren mountains; and we halted by the side of a torrent which flows down from the heights of Eden, and which then rolled along heaps of half-melted snow. The sheikh had ordered a large fire to be lighted under the shelter of a rock, and we breakfasted and rested our horses in this place. The ascent afterwards became so rapid, over bare rocks, smooth as polished marble, that it is almost inconceivable how the Arab horses contrive to climb them—still more how they manage to descend them. Four Arabs on foot surrounded each of our horses, and assisted them with their hands and

* Corresp. d'Orient.

shoulders, notwithstanding which aid, many of them slipped down on the rock, but no accident occurred of importance. This frightful road, or rather this perpendicular wall, led us, after two hours' toil, to a rocky table-land, whence we looked down on a wide inner valley and the village of Eden, which is built at its highest extremity, and in the snowy region. Above Eden there is only a huge pyramid of naked rock, the last peak of this part of Lebanon, with a small ruined chapel on its summit. The blasts of winter, continually gnawing at this rock, detach from it huge blocks, which roll even into the village. All the fields in the vicinity are strewed with them, and the castle of the sheikh himself is encompassed with them on all sides.

This castle, to which we were drawing near, is of a style of architecture thoroughly Arab: the windows are double ogived arches, separated by elegant columns; the arched gateway is flanked by two benches of cut stone, and the door-case is covered with arabesques. The sheikh, riding on in advance, dismounted and received us at the head of his household. His youngest son, with a silver chafing-dish in his hand, burned incense before our horses, and his brother threw perfumed essences over our horses and our clothes. A sumptuous repast awaited us in the hall, where whole trees were blazing in the ample fire-place. The choicest wines of Lebanon and Cyprus, and a prodigious quantity of game, gave zest to the banquet. Our Arabs fared as sumptuously in the court of the castle.

The entertainment was very joyous, and, above all, very noisy; the health of each of the principal guests was drunk with all the honours. The custom of the country requires that each toast should be followed by a song. The Maronite who did all the singing passes for one of the best vocalists in the country; I will not, however, take upon me to say that he would make his fortune in London or Paris. No one eats or drinks during the performance of the song, but each man sits still with his glass in his hand; when the song is ended, the guests hob-nob in honour of the person toasted.* This method of proceeding adds intolerably to the length of the entertainment; and the Frank traveller, sitting with his legs crossed and his heels tucked under him, is naturally disposed to say with Christopher Sly, "An excellent piece of work, surely: would it were done!"

While I am on this subject I may mention a dinner of this kind to which I was invited by the Sardinian consul of Beyroot, and at which I met the sons of the Emir Beshir. The princes were dressed in magnificent caftans, interwoven throughout with gold thread; their turbans were composed of the richest stuffs of Cashmere. The eldest, who commanded his father's troops, had a poniard, the handle of which was encrusted all over with diamonds of immense value. Their suite was numerous and novel; besides a great number of white and black slaves, there was a poet, whose functions exactly corresponded to those of the bards in the middle ages. His business was to sing the virtues and exploits of his master, to amuse him with romantic tales, and to stand behind him at meals and improvise verses. There was likewise a Maronite father-confessor in the party—a jovial, burly-looking monk. The reverend man was seated at table, in consideration of

* Poujoulat.

his ecclesiastical character; but the poet remained on his legs. After numerous toasts, chiefly of a political kind, the prince proposed the health of the ladies present; and the bard being called on by his patron to improvise something appropriate to the occasion, sang in recitative, and at the full pitch of his voice, some verses to the following effect:—

"Let us drink the juice of Eden, which makes drunk and rejoices the heart of slave and prince. It is the wine of those plants which Noah himself planted, when the dove, instead of the olive branch, brought him from heaven a shoot of the vine. By virtue of this wine the poet for a while becomes a prince, and the prince a poet.

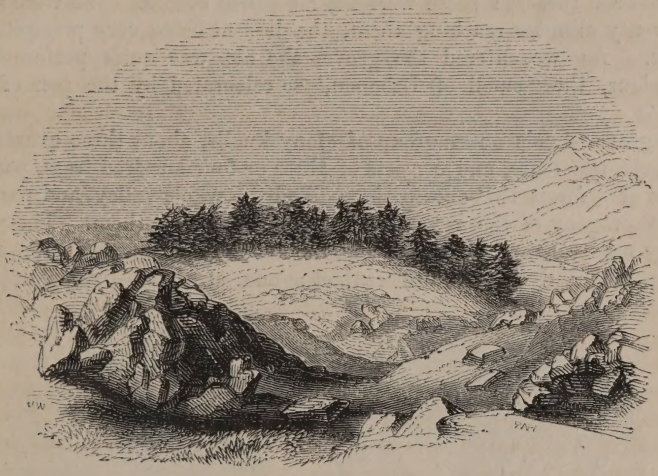
"Let us drink it in honour of those fair young Franks who come from the land where every woman is a queen. The eyes of the women of Syria are soft, but they are veiled. In the eyes of the daughters of the West there is more intoxication than in the transparent cup from which I quaff.

"To drink wine and to gaze in the faces of women is for the Muslim to commit two sins; for the Arab it is doubly to enjoy and to give twofold praise to God."

Numerous and earnest Mashallahs greeted the conclusion of this poetical effort, with which no one seemed more delighted than the jolly chaplain. He aided the bard with his voice in the burden of the song, and he tossed off his glass like a man, in honour of the toast.

Messengers had been sent on by the sheikh to ascertain if the snow would allow of our reaching the cedars. They reported on their return that all access to them was impossible, there being fourteen feet of snow in a narrow valley which must be passed to reach them. Wishing to get as near the cedars as possible, I set out the next morning at sunrise, accompanied by the sheikh's son. We proceeded for three hours along the mountain ridges and plains rendered swampy by the melting snow, and arrived on the margin of the Valley of Saints, a profound gorge, more iron-bound, more gloomy and solemn than even that of Hamana. At the head of this valley, where it rises continuously to the region of the snows, a magnificent sheet of water, three or four hundred yards broad, falls from a height of a hundred feet. The whole valley resounds with this fall and with the whirl of the torrent it feeds; the foam drips from the rocks all along the flanks of the mountains. Far down as the eye could reach, at the bottom of the ravine, we descried two villages, the houses of which were hardly distinguishable from the rocks in the bed of the torrent. The branches of the poplars and mulberries appeared in the distance like tufts of rushes or long grass. We descended to the village of Bsherray, by a path hewn in the rock, so steep that it appears inconceivable that men should hazard themselves upon it. Many fatal accidents occur. A stone thrown from the top of the cliff would fall on the roofs of these villages, which yet it cost us an hour's continual descent to reach. Above the cascade and the snows immense fields of ice undulate like vapours of alternate green and blue; and about a mile to the left, in a sort of semicircular vale, formed by the highest cliffs of Lebanon, we perceived a large black spot on the snow. This was the renowned group of cedars; they crown the brow of the mountain like a diadem, and look down on the outbranchings of the numerous large valleys that cleave its

sides; the sea and the sky are their horizon. We urged our horses through the snow, to come as near as possible to the group; but they sank up to the



General view of the Cedars.

shoulders when within five or six hundred yards of the trees. Thus convinced that the report of the Arabs was true, and that we must forego the gratification of touching with our hands those living relics of ages, we got off our horses, and seated ourselves on a rock to contemplate them.

Other travellers have been more fortunate than ourselves in their first visit to the Cedars. Lord Lindsay's tour to them was made in the month of June, a much more favourable period for travelling in the mountains than we had chosen. He gives a most animated description of the impressions produced upon him by the aspect of the hallowed grove. Ascending the eastern slope of the mountains in the direction from Balbec to Bsherray, he says:—

"An hour afterwards we reached an immense wreath of snow, lying on the breast of the mountain, just below the summit—and from that summit five minutes afterwards what a prospect opened before us! Two vast ridges of Lebanon, curving westwards from the central spot where we stood, like the horns of a bent bow, or the wings of a theatre, ran down towards the sea, breaking in their descent into a hundred minor hills, between which, unseen, unheard, and through as deep and dark and jagged a chasm as ever yawned, the Kadisha, or Sacred River of Lebanon, rushes down to the Mediterranean—the blue and boundless Mediterranean, which, far on the western horizon, meets and mingles with the sky.*

* "One may see there the spring of a rivulet which the inhabitants call *the holy river*, for that it takes its source from the mountain whereon grow the cedar saints, in a very hidden and delicious place, and from it descends along the valley, running with little murmuring streams among flint stones." Father Dandini. 1600.

"Our eyes, coming home again, after roving over the noble view, we had leisure to observe a small clump of trees, not larger apparently than a clump in an English park, at the very foot of the northern wing or horn of this grand natural theatre: these were the far-famed cedars. We were an hour and twenty minutes reaching them, the descent being very precipitous and difficult. As we entered the grove, the air was quite perfumed with their odour, the 'smell of Lebanon,' so celebrated by the pen of inspiration."

The grove stands on a group of stony knolls, about three quarters of a mile in circumference, and consists of three or four hundred trees, partly the remains of a forest that once perhaps filled the whole valley, and partly the younger progeny of the venerable patriarchs amongst them. The younger are very numerous, and would form a noble wood of themselves, were even the patriarchal dynasty quite extinct; one of them, by no means the

Old Cedars of Lebanon.

largest, measures nineteen feet and a quarter in circumference, and, in repeated instances, two, three, and four large trunks spring from a single root—but they have all a fresher appearance than the patriarchs, and straighter stems—straight as young palm trees. They are not so *very* young neither. Russegger thinks that most of the trees in the grove may be a couple of centuries old, and several between the ages of 400 and 800 years; there are twelve whose age is incalculable; seven standing very near each other, three more a little further on, nearly in a line with them, and two, not observed by any recent traveller except Lord Lindsay, on the northern edge of the grove; the largest of these two is sixty-three feet in circumference, (following the sinuosities of the bark,) one of the others measures forty-nine feet.

These giants are more remarkable for girth than stature; their height hardly exceeding fifty feet; they all part into several stems, but as this partition takes place about five feet from the root, there is not the difficulty

which some have alleged in ascertaining their true dimensions. Their age is very variously estimated; their most sanguine admirers believe them to have been contemporary with Solomon; and though this draws rather too strongly on our credulity, yet there is no direct evidence to contradict it. The rules by which botanists determine the age of trees are not applicable to these, for their stems have ceased to grow in regular concentric rings; they owe their prolonged existence to the superior vitality of a portion of their bark, which has survived the decay of the rest. Russegger, however, is inclined to admit that these trees may possibly number some two thousand years, taking into consideration their size, their girth, the stony soil in which they grow, and their lofty position, exposed so much to the violence of the winds.

They are certainly the most celebrated natural monuments in the universe. Religion, poetry, and history have equally consecrated them; they furnish a class of images which the inspired writers use with especial preference. The Arabs of all creeds have a traditional veneration for these trees. They believe that an evil fate would surely overtake any one who shall dare to lay sacrilegious hands on these *saints*, as they fondly call them.* They attribute to them not only a vegetative vigour, that endows them with perpetual existence, but also a soul which enables them to exhibit signs of sagacity and foresight, similar to those arising from instinct in animals and from intellect in man. They know the seasons beforehand, they move their vast limbs, they stretch them out or draw them in, raise them to the heavens or bend them to the earth, according as the snow is about to fall or melt. They are divine beings under the form of trees. This is the only spot on the chain of Lebanon where they grow, and here they take root far above the region where all considerable vegetation ceases. All this strikes and astonishes the imagination of the people of the East, and I know not but that science itself would be surprised.

Every year, at the feast of the Transfiguration, the Maronites, Greeks, and Armenians, mount to the cedars and celebrate mass on a homely altar of stone at their feet. How many prayers have resounded under their branches! And what more sublime temple, what altar nearer the heavens! What fane more majestic and holy, than the loftiest level of Lebanon, the trunks of the cedars, and the canopy of those sacred branches which have shaded and still shade so many human generations, pronouncing the name of God in different accents, but recognising Him everywhere in His works, and adoring Him in the manifestations of His creation!

The stately bearing and graceful repose of the young cedars contrast singularly with the wild aspect and frantic attitude of the old ones, flinging abroad their knotted and muscular limbs like so many Laocoons, while others, broken off, lie rotting at their feet; but life is strong in them all; they look as if they had been struggling for existence with evil spirits, and God had interposed and forbidden the war, that the trees He had planted might remain living witnesses to faithless men of the ancient "glory of Lebanon." . . . Burckhardt says the oldest trees are distinguished by having the foliage and small branches at the top only, and by four, five, or even seven

* Father Dandini.

trunks springing from one base. The branches and foliage of the others were lower, but he saw none whose leaves touched the ground like those of Kew Gardens.

Young Cedar of Lebanon.

The very air of the cedar impresses one with the idea of its comparative immortality. There is a firmness in the bark and a stability in the trunk, in the mode in which it lays hold of the ground, and in the form of the branches and their insertion into the trunk, not found in any other pine, scarcely in any other tree. The foliage too is superior to that of any other of the tribe, each branch being perfect in its form; the points of the leaves spread upwards into beautiful little tufts, and the whole upper surface of the branch has the appearance of velvet; the colour is a rich green, wanting the bluish tint of the pine and fir, and the lurid and gloomy hue of the cypress. The cedar is an evergreen; the fruit resembles the cone of the pine; the wood is compact and of a beautiful brown tint, and though its resistance to actual wear is not equal to that of the oak, it is so bitter that no insect will touch it, and it seems proof against time itself. If the rapidity of its growth were at all correspondent to its other qualities, it would be the most valuable tree in the forest. The oldest cedars in our own country do not date much above 150 years back; they are supposed to reach maturity in less than three centuries.

Lord Lindsay had intended proceeding that evening to Bsherray, "but no, we could not resolve to leave those glorious trees so soon—the loveliest, the noblest, the holiest in the whole world. The tent was pitched, and we spent the rest of the day under their 'shadowy shroud.' Oh what a church that grove is! Never did I think Solomon's song so beautiful, and that most noble chapter of Ezekiel, the thirty-first; I had read it on the heights of Syene, Egypt on my right-hand, and Ethiopia on my left, with many another denunciation, how awfully fulfilled, of desolation against Pathros and judgments upon No; but this was the place to enjoy it, lying under one of those vast trees, looking up every now and then into its thick boughs, hearing the little birds warbling, and a perpetual hum of insect life

pervading the air with its drowsy melody. Eden is close by—these are the 'trees of Eden,' 'the choice and best of Lebanon,' these are the trees—there can be none nobler, which Solomon spake of, 'from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall;' the object of repeated allusion and comparison throughout the Bible,—the emblem of the righteous in David's sabbath hymn,—and honour above honour,—the likeness of the countenance of the Son of God in the inspired canticles of Solomon.

"Our encampment was very picturesque that night, the fire throwing a strong light on the cedar that over-canopied us; those enormous arms of ghastly whiteness seemed almost alive, and about to catch us up into the thick darkness they issued from."

Mounting our horses again, we rode for three hours over the table-lands which command the valleys of the Kadisha, and descended to Kanobin, the most celebrated of all the Maronite monasteries. We had a sight of the monastery of Mar Serkis, with the very remarkable pointed rocks rising over it.—(*See page* 81.)

Kanobin was originally founded, say the Maronite monks, by Theodosius the Great. According to the old French traveller, Monconys, the present edifice was erected by Saladin, when he took the country, in gratitude for the hospitable reception afforded him by the superior when he passed that way incognito. The magnificent ravine in which it is situated is of immense depth, broken into vast hollows, overhung with trees, chiefly prickly oaks, and shooting into pinnacles, between which the mountain torrents rush down on all sides, some of them forming beautiful cascades many hundred feet in height. At Kanobin, however, the voice even of the Kadisha is scarcely heard; a profound silence reigns; all is grandeur; but grandeur in repose; the choicest place in the world for dreaming away one's life in monastic inactivity. The convent hangs about two-thirds down the precipice, partly built up against, partly excavated in the rocks; it looks as if suspended in mid air, being supported by a lofty wall built against the side of the mountain.

Here, in winter only, resides the Batrak or patriarch of the Maronites. There is little worth seeing in the interior except the church, which is a large and beautiful grotto cut lengthways in the rock. The portraits of the patriarchs, mentioned by old travellers, no longer line its walls; but there are several paintings of a character superior to what one would expect to see in such an out-of-the-way place—daubs, but done in Italy.*

In point of structure Kanobin bears some resemblance to the convent of St. Anthony at Kasheya, of which we have spoken in this chapter. It is three hours' distance from Kanobin, and near the village of Eden. There are printing-presses at work in both establishments; and in both it is customary with the peasants to suspend their silk-worms in bags during the winter, before the portrait of some favourite saint, whose influence they implore for a plenteous harvest: from this custom the convents derive a considerable revenue.† The day must be short with the inhabitants of Kasheya, for none but a meridian sun ever descends into its dark recesses.

* Lord Lindsay. † Burckhardt.

On our return from this excursion, so memorable for a traveller, we got entangled in the windings of the rocks, and in the numberless high gorges with which this group of Lebanon is intersected in all directions, and we suddenly found ourselves on the margin of an enormous precipitous wall of rock, sinking some thousand feet in depth, and hemming in the Valley of Saints. The sides of this granite rampart were so perpendicular that even the mountain-goats could not have found footing on them, and our Arabs were obliged to crawl on their hands and knees, and stoop over the abyss to perceive its base. The sun was sinking, and we had toiled many hours, and several more were required to retrace our lost route, and get back to Eden. We dismounted from our horses, and putting ourselves under the conduct of a guide who knew, at a little distance, a path in the rock cut by the Maronite monks, the immemorial occupants of this valley, we clung for some time along the edges of the cornice, and at last descended over the slippery steps to a detached platform, which commanded the whole prospect.

Convent of St. Anthony near Eden.

The valley began from the foot of the snows, and from the cedars, which formed a black cloud upon them, by wide and gentle slopes, rounding into swards of yellow and delicate green, like that on the high groups of Jura or the Alps: a multitude of foaming rivulets, issuing, on all sides, from the dissolving snow, ploughed these grassy banks, and united in a single body of whirling waves at the foot of the first declivity. There the valley fell, all at once, 400 or 500 feet deep; and the torrent was precipitated with it, in a wide volume, now covering the rock, as if with a liquid and transparent curtain, now leaping and shooting into arches, and falling at last on large sharp-pointed blocks of granite, torn from the summit, where it was broken into floating shreds, and roared like endless thunder; the blast of the fall reached even the point where we stood, carrying with it the spray of a thousand tints, like a vapoury mist, throwing it over the whole valley, or hanging it like dew upon the leaves of the shrubs and the rough points of

the rock. Advancing towards the north, the Valley of Saints dived more and more, and expanded into greater width, when, about two miles from where we were standing, two bare and frowning mountains gradually approached each other, scarcely leaving an opening of a few yards between their two extremities, where the valley was terminated and lost with its green banks, hanging vines, poplars, cypresses, and milky torrent. Over these two mountains that thus choked it, we could perceive, at the horizon, what seemed a lake of deeper blue than the sky—it was a portion of the Syrian sea, inclosed in a curiously-formed gulf by other mountains of Lebanon. This gulf was twenty leagues from us; but the transparency of the atmosphere brought it, as it were, to our feet; and we distinguished even two ships under sail, which, hanging between the blue of the heavens and that of the sea, and lessened by the distance, seemed two swans gliding on the horizon. This spectacle seized us so irresistibly at first, that we did not dwell upon the details of the valley; but when the first dazzling surprise was over, and our eyes could pierce the evening vapours that overhung the waters, a scene of another description opened by degrees before us.

At each winding of the torrent, where the gurgling stream left a point of land, a Maronite convent stood out, with its walls of red-tinted brown, from the ashy gray of the rock, and sent its spiral smoke amongst the branches of the poplars and cypresses. Around the convents, small inclosures, won from the rock or the torrent, seemed cultivated with as much care as the best-kept gardens of our country-houses, and, straggling here and there, we perceived the Maronites themselves, with their black cowls, returning from the labours of the field—some with the spade on their shoulder, some leading Arab colts, and others, again, holding the handle of the plough, and directing their oxen amongst the mulberry-trees. Several of these habitations of prayer and labour were suspended, with their chapels and grottoes, upon the projecting cliffs of the two mountains; some were hollowed out, like the caves of wild beasts, in the rock itself; we could only discern the door-way, surmounted by an open ogive, where a bell was hung, and some narrow terraces, hewn under the canopy of the rock, where the aged and infirm monks came to breathe the air, and enjoy a little sunshine. To some of the precipitous ledges the eye could discover no access, but on even those were a convent, an oratory, or a hermitage, and some anchorites winding amid the rocks and shrubs, working, reading, or praying. One of these convents contained an Arab printing-press, for the instruction of the Maronite people; and we saw, on the terrace, a crowd of monks, moving to and fro, and spreading out the white sheets of damp paper upon bunches of reeds. Nothing can describe, unless it be the pencil, the multitude and the picturesque effect of these retreats; each stone seemed to have become a cell, and every grotto to have its hermit; every rill was full of movement and life; every tree had its anchorite under its branches; wherever the eye fell, it saw the valley, the mountain, and the precipices, grow, as it were, into animation under its gaze, and a scene of life, prayer, and contemplation, stand out from the eternal masses, or mingle with, and hallow them.

But in a little while the sun set, the labours of the day ceased, and all the

black figures, scattered in the valley, retreated into the grottoes or the monasteries. The bells sounded, on all sides, the hour for congregating to the evening service; some with the strong and vibrating tone of a high wind upon the seas, others with silvery tinklings, like birds in a field of corn, others, again, plaintive and indistinct as sighs by night in the desert. The bells answered each other from the two opposite sides of the valley; and the thousand echoes of the grottoes and precipices multiplied them in confused and reverberating murmurs, mingled with the roar of the torrent, and the numberless plashing falls of the brooks and cascades with which the mountain-sides were furrowed. Then came a moment of silence, and a fresh echo, more soft, melancholy, and solemn, filled the valley: it was the chant of psalms, which, rising all at once from every monastery and church, from every oratory and rocky grotto, mounted to us in a confused and vast murmur, resembling one single melodious lament uttered by the whole valley, as if it had just found a soul and a voice. A perfume then spread through that air, which angels might have breathed; we stood mute and overjoyed like those celestial spirits, when, hovering over the globe they believed a desert, they heard rising from these same regions the first prayer of mankind. We felt how the voice of man can give life to nature in her deadest aspect, and what song will be at the end of time, when all the emotions of the human heart shall be absorbed and concentrated in one single sentiment, and poetry shall be here below but one hymn of adoration!

Part of the Kadisha.

We returned that night to Eden, and arrived in town to witness the ceremony of fetching a bride on the eve of a nuptial day. The description of a Maronite wedding may serve as a general specimen of the Christian marriage ceremonies; for, though each sect has its respective mode of church service, the differences on that point are not material, and the manner of conducting the feast is nearly the same.

The priests, from their easy access to families, have a principal share in matrimonial negotiations; and, having opportunities of being acquainted

with the tempers of the children, they are supposed to be sincere in their reports. The female relations of the youth, too, (as among the Muslims) are employed in the search for a bride. When the choice is determined, flowers, and other small presents, are, from time to time, sent from the family of the bridegroom to that of the bride, and the relations interchange visits; but the girl, before company, will not so much as touch a flower that has come from the other house; and if the bridegroom happen to be named in her presence, she suddenly assumes a reserved air, becomes silent, or retires. The women know this so well, that, when the young lady happens to be rather pert, they threaten to make her soon change her tone, and the hint is sufficient to silence her.

After the bride has been demanded in form, and other matters have been adjusted, a certain number of the male relations are invited to an entertainment by her father, in order to settle the wedding-day, which is usually fixed at the distance of a fortnight.

In the afternoon of the day preceding that of the nuptials, the same company again repair to the bride's house, and proceeding thence after supper to the house of the bridegroom, they find most of the persons assembled who have been invited to the wedding. The bridegroom and *shebeen*, or brideman, do not at first make their appearance, but, after a short search, are discovered lurking, as it were, on purpose, in a dishabille not suited to the approaching ceremony. From their refuge they are led in triumph round the court-yard, amid the shouts of the assembly, and then conducted into a chamber to dress, where the wedding garments are ready displayed; but, before these are put on, a priest pronounces a long benediction over them. When the bridegroom is dressed, he is again obliged to make several turns in procession, in the same manner as before. The women all this time remain in a separate apartment.

About midnight, all the men, and most of the women, each carrying a wax taper, set out in procession, preceded by a band of music, in order to fetch the bride. Upon their arrival at her house, they are refused admission, a party of the bride's kindred standing ready to dispute the entrance; and, in consequence of this, a mock skirmish usually ensues, in which the bridegroom's party is always victorious. The women now advancing to the inner apartments soon return in triumph with the bride, who is entirely covered with a large veil, and attended only by her *shebeeny* or bridesmaid, and one or two female relations; for the mother and nearest kindred are not by custom allowed to accompany her. The paternal house is in deep affliction at her departure, but she is received by the expecting crowd with repeated shouts of joy, and in that manner conducted to the bridegroom's house. Their course, however, is extremely slow, for decorum imperatively requires that every step of the bashful bride towards the abode of her destined spouse should be made with the utmost seeming reluctance. A very bad opinion, indeed, would be conceived of the girl who, on such an occasion, did not consume an hour at least in walking a distance of ten minutes. Just in the inverse ratio of her speed is the honour due to her virtuous breeding and maiden modesty.

On her passing the threshold, she is saluted with a general zilareet*, and

* The shrill vibratory cry uttered in chorus by the Arab women on joyful occasions. "It is

after the long veil has been exchanged for one of red gauze, she is led into a large apartment, and seated in state at the upper end, upon the deewan. In this situation, it would be an offence to decency to utter a syllable, or to smile, she being by etiquette obliged to remain all the time with her eyelids shut, but she is prepared to rise up and kiss the hand of every female who enters the room to congratulate her, each being announced by a person placed near her on purpose. The women pass the remainder of the night in loud rejoicings, while the men, on their part, are not less noisy. There is abundance of arrack, wine, coffee, and other refreshments, and only a few of the elderly guests retire to rest. When it happens that the house is not sufficiently large to afford separate apartments for the men and women, an adjoining house is borrowed for the reception of the men.

About nine in the morning, the bishop—or, in the lower ranks, a priest—comes to perform the nuptial ceremony. The music ceases the moment he enters, and a respectful silence reigns through the house. The women all veil for his reception, and, as soon as he is robed in his canonicals, he enters the harem, followed by the bridegroom and the men in select procession. The bride appears, standing in front of the deewan, supported by two women besides the shebeeny; the rest of the women fill up the space behind. The bridegroom, dressed in a kind of splendid robe, and attended by the shebeen, is placed on the bride's left hand. The bishop then proceeds, and, in the course of the nuptial service, puts a crown, first on the head of the bridegroom, and next upon the bride's; he afterwards crowns both the shebeen and the shebeeny. The man answers audibly to the usual matrimonial question, but the consent of the woman is denoted by a gentle inclination of the head. The bishop immediately joins their hands, and, after several prayers and benedictions, puts a ring upon the bridegroom's finger, delivering another to the shebeeny, to be put on the finger of the bride. Towards the conclusion of the service, the bishop ties a piece of riband round the bridegroom's neck, which remains till a priest in the afternoon comes to take it off.

The ceremony thus finished, the men return to the outer apartments, where it being too early for the whole company to dine, a dinner is served up to the bishop and his suite with a few select persons. The pause occasioned by the bishop's presence is at an end the moment he quits the house, the music then strikes up in full chorus, and, as if to make up for time lost, the noise on all hands is redoubled. The Christians, on these occasions, are more noisy than the Mohammedans, for besides the musical band which performs almost incessantly, many of the men join with the professed singers in the chorus. Some of them also show their skill in dancing, which they seldom do on any other occasion. Interludes of buffoons and jugglers are from time to time introduced by way of variety. The company pass the whole day in this manner; arrack and wine circulate briskly; the table at dinner and supper is covered with profusion; and fruits, sweatmeats, coffee, and tobacco are served at intervals.

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made," says Pietro della Vale, "by a quick and somewhat tremulous application of the tongue to the palate, producing the sound heli li li li li li li." These syllables are repeated as often as can be done in one breath: they are heard at a great distance.

Between eleven and twelve at night, the bridegroom accompanied by a few of the near relations, is introduced into the women's apartment, where a collation of fruit and wine is prepared. The bride receives him standing up, and is with difficulty prevailed on at his entreaty to resume her place. This interview is soon over, for after the young couple have drunk a glass to each other, the bridegroom drinks a bumper to the female guests, and then returns to the company, who are waiting without to receive him with loud acclamations.

The remainder of the night is spent in the same way as the preceding one. Next morning, the bridegroom presents jewels and other ornaments to his wife, her kindred at the same time making her presents in money. It is not till after some days that others, who have been invited to the wedding, send presents of various kinds, and that she receives congratulatory messages and flowers from her acquaintance.

The nuptial feast concludes with a collation on the afternoon of the third day, after which the whole company take leave, except a few intimate friends, who stay to sup with the bridegroom, and consign him at midnight in a condition most heartily fatigued to the arms of his bride.

The succeeding week is filled up in receiving complimentary messages; and on the seventh day, the bride entertains her mother and near relations, who come then to pay their first visit.

However the other women may be amused, the bride herself enjoys but a small share in the pleasures of the wedding festivities. The ceremonies she is obliged to go through for three days are fatiguing to the last degree, and the incessant din, joined to the natural timidity of the sex, keeps her in a state of perpetual anxiety. As she knows herself exposed to the captious observation of her own sex, she dreads to move a limb, lest it should be censured as an offence against the decorum of her situation; and if those whose office it is to take care of her refreshments should happen to neglect their duty, she dares hardly venture to open her lips to ask for a glass of water. I have heard several married ladies describe the distress of their situation with much pleasantry. Some have assured me, that they were not only half frightened out of their wits by the incessant bustle and sudden shouts, but in risk also of perishing from thirst, being neglected by the servants in the hurry of their attention to the company. Besides these restrictions which terminate with the three ceremonial days, the newly married woman is enjoined strict silence for the space of a month, and must consider it an indulgence if allowed to utter a few words to her husband. Among the Armenians, this term is said to be protracted to a twelve month. It is sometimes jocosely remarked by the husbands, that when their wives are particularly observant of the precepts they receive on this head from the old women, they seldom fail to make up for it by their loquacity after the expiration of the term. The Maronite women seem to be the least rigid of all in the observance of these severe restraints*.

* Russell, Natural History of Aleppo.

CHAPTER X.

ROUTE FROM TRIPOLI TO LATAKIAH.—STORY OF ABOULIAS.—ANCIENT MONUMENTS.—SERPENT CHARMERS.—STRANGE REMEDIES.

As I * wished to proceed from Tripoli to Latakiah, the consul's cavass was despatched to procure horses for the latter place; this was at last effected with some difficulty; and on their arrival Ahmet, my factotum, intimated a wish to leave my service on the plea of ill health: but he knew a man who would be ready to attend me immediately, and who, moreover, was a capital cook. Within half-an-hour I had engaged the man thus recommended. His history was a singular one.

A Cavass.

He was a young and intelligent Christian of Aleppo, where he had established a small commerce in stuffs of the country, which he went himself to sell, mounted on an ass, amongst the tribes of wandering Arabs, who come in the winter to encamp in the plains about Antioch. His commerce prospered; but his quality of infidel giving him some anxiety, he thought it best to associate himself with a Muslim Arab of Aleppo. The trade now went on all the better, and at the end of some years Aboulias found himself one of the most eminent merchants of the country. But he was enamoured of a young Græco-Syrian girl, and they would not give her to him except on condition of his quitting Aleppo, and establishing himself in the neighbourhood of Seyde, where the family of his young mistress resided. He required to realise his fortune; and a quarrel ensued between the two partners about the partition of the wealth acquired in common. The Mohammedan Arab prepared a snare for poor Aboulias; he posted concealed witnesses, who heard the latter blaspheme Mohammed in the heat of dispute,—a mortal crime for an infidel. Aboulias was dragged before the pasha, and condemned to be hanged. The sentence was put in execution; but the cord having broken, the unfortunate man fell to the foot of the gibbet, and was left for dead on the place of execution. The relations of his bride, however, having obtained from the pacha permission to bury his body with the forms of their religion, carried it into their house, and perceiving that Aboulias

* Monro.

gave signs of life, they resuscitated him, concealed him in a cave for some days, and interred an empty coffin, to avoid exciting the suspicion of the Turks. But the latter somehow got scent of the deceit; and Aboulias was again arrested, at the moment he was escaping in the night from the gates of the town. Being taken before the pasha, he related to him how his life had been saved without any fault of his. The pasha, according to a text of the Koran, which was favourable to the accused, gave him the alternative either of being hanged a second time, or of becoming a Turk. Aboulias preferred the latter, and for some time practised Islamism. When his adventure was forgotten, and his conversion certified, he found means to escape from Aleppo, and to embark for the Isle of Cyprus, where he made himself once more a Christian. He espoused the woman whom he loved, obtained the protection of the French, and was enabled to reappear with impunity in Syria, where he continued his trade as a packman amongst the Druzes, Maronites, and Arabs. His talent as a cook consisted in making a fire in the open air with prickly plants, or the dried dung of camels; in suspending a brass kettle upon two cross-sticks, and in boiling therein rice and chickens, or morsels of lamb. He could also heat round flints in the fire, and spread upon them, when they were almost red, a paste of barley meal which he had kneaded, and thus he made bread*.

It was nearly sunset when we left Tripoli; and after passing through the olive grounds that extend to some distance on the north side, we pitched at night near a khan upon the right bank of the Nahr-el-Bered, or Cold River. Moving before sunrise, we rode through a fine grass country, crossing a few streams, and skirting some swamps; and after three hours' journey we came upon a deserted village, the inhabitants having taken up their tents and gone to a distance, as the custom is during the summer months. The village, standing upon a mound, was surrounded by thistles, strong and lofty as those of the Pampas, among which was a thick spreading oak; a clear stream running by the place refreshed us with its murmurs as we boiled our kettle under the shade of the tree. Beyond is a well-watered grass country; and at three hours we entered a myrtle wood, which extends for some miles along the shore. Through it runs a small stream, issuing from the Ain-el-Hayeh, or Serpent Fountain,—a good spring, "though of a bad name," says Maundrell; it is but a quarter of a mile from the sea. All round the fountain, and for some distance southward of it, are considerable

Sepulchral Excavations near Tartous.

* Lamartine.

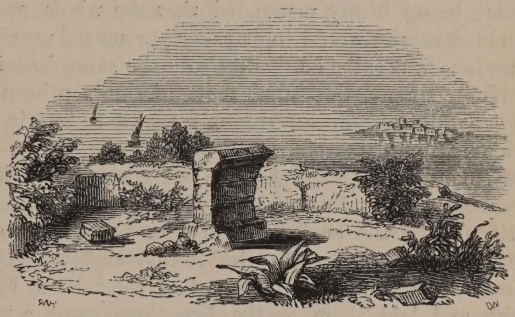
traces of foundations, and ruins, and ancient sepulchres. Among those furthest south is what the learned Pococke calls "one of the most extraordinary pieces of antiquity that are to be seen." A court, fifty yards square, has been cut in the natural rock, the sides of which, about three yards high, supply the place of walls, except on the north side, which is open. Here there are signs of two entrances, which Pococke thinks were joined by a wall on each side. In the centre of this area, a square part of the rock has been left standing, three yards high, and five and a half square, to serve as a pedestal for a throne. The throne itself is composed of four large stones—two at the sides, one at the back, and one overhanging them in the manner of a canopy: this stone is five yards and three-quarters square, and has a handsome cornice sculptured round it of a kind common in Upper Egypt. The whole structure is about twenty feet high, and fronts the open side of the court. At the two inner angles of the area there seem to have been two small apartments: pillars of the natural rock have been left here, apparently for doorways. The court was probably a temple; for, as Maundrell observes, "Hercules, *i. e.* the Sun, the great abomination of the Phœnicians, was wont to be adored in an open temple."

North of the fountain there is another still larger excavation in the solid rock, thirty yards over at top, and stretching in a direct line east and west more than a furlong. The sides slope down, with seven steps on each, extending the whole length of the excavation, but not descending to the bottom. They were probably intended for seats rather than for stairs. The eastern end seems to have terminated in a semicircle. At the west end the rock has been cut away in such a manner as to lead to the supposition that there were formerly apartments there. One part is cut into a square area, from which there is a way into the valley, directly opposite to the temple. Pococke conjectures that the place was anciently a circus. Directly south of the temple, the rocks, which rise higher in that part, have been worked like quarries, and sunk down in many places, possibly as reservoirs for water. There are also, in different parts, many walls cut out of the rock, and particularly in one place, almost an entire house; the rock is cut away from it all round; there are many niches, windows, and doors in it, and a wall of division along the middle, with a doorway.

Sepulchral Towers.

About half a mile south of these walls are two remarkable sepulchral towers, beneath which are several chambers, each containing numerous cells for corpses, hewn out of the firm rock.

While the horses and their guardians reposed among the myrtles by the side of the stream, I revelled for a time in the sea. We caught here two large land tortoises, which I would gladly have converted into soup, but this was beyond the reach of my new cook's art; moreover, he was half afraid of the creatures, so I was obliged to release them. Something less than a league from the shore, at a short distance from Tartous, is the Island of Ruad, the Arpad of scripture, one of the Canaanitish settlements, whose king was reduced by Sennacherib. By the Greeks it was called Aradus, and according to Dionysius it was formerly joined to the continent by a bridge. It was once a powerful maritime republic; but now its population is only fifteen hundred. The island, half a league in circumference, is partly covered by the town, and many pieces of the wall which formerly encircled it still exist, consisting of large blocks of stone, some of them fifteen feet long, set up uncemented, together with the ruins of some square towers of more modern date.



Ancient Tomb. Aradus in the distance.

The greater part of the Arab vessels employed in the coasting trade are still built at this day in the island. Perrier asserts, in contradiction to Volney, that the inhabitants retain a traditional memory of an abundant spring of fresh water, situated between the island and the shore of the mainland. The ancient people of Aradus used to draw water thence in time of war by means of a leaden bell with a leathern pipe fitted to it.

Another tradition makes a rock near the island the spot where Andromeda was exposed to the sea-monster, though Jaffa is more generally considered to have been the scene of that mythological drama. Be this as it may, the people of the country still show the serpent's rock, Hadjar-el-Hayeh. The serpent, indeed, figures largely in the local nomenclature of the regions between Tripoli and Latakiah. We have already seen the Serpent Fountain; and near Gebelee there is a hill called Jebel-el-Hayeh (serpent mountain), which is said to derive its name from the ancient *ophiogene* race of Cyprus, some of whom settled there, and from whom many of the modern snake-charmers of Syria pretend to be descended.

There are in Syria, as well as in India, many jugglers, who boast of the same power over serpents, as that possessed by the ancient psylli of Africa. They will fearlessly handle the most dangerous serpents, fold them round their bodies, provoke and bite them, because, as they tell you, the serpent has no power to hurt them. The probability is, that they take the simple precaution of disarming the reptile, by extracting its poison fangs. These men are often called in to private houses to conjure the serpents out of the

walls. The reptiles, on hearing the call of the charmer, soon put out their heads; and after being vehemently adjured *by the great name! by the greatest of names!* they creep obsequiously into the bag held open to receive them. The whole force of the conjuration consists, doubtless, in legerdemain; but so adroitly is it performed, that a person even aware of the trick might sometimes be almost imposed on by it.

The superstitious notions of the Syrians respecting serpents and snakes surpass all imaginable measure of absurdity. They attribute numberless powers for good or evil to those disgusting reptiles; and very rarely does a Syrian peasant venture to kill or even to disturb a serpent that has made its nest in a wall, being firmly persuaded that the whole generation of the killed or wounded reptile would implacably pursue the murderer and his kin till their vengeance was satisfied. Precisely the same belief prevails, as we are told by Kohl, among the inhabitants of the southern steppes of Russia, who are generally too much afraid of a snake to kill it, even though it take up its abode under the same roof with them. "Let a snake alone," says the Russian, "and he will let you alone; but if you kill it, its whole race will persecute you." In support of their belief in something of a corporation spirit among the snakes which prompts them to revenge the blood of a relation, they appeal to the twenty-eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said: "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." The expression "murderer" in this passage they interpret to mean a murderer of snakes; and the "vengeance" to mean the vengeance of a snake on one that has dyed his hand in the blood of another snake. The snake they believe is in the habit of dispensing poetical justice towards murderers in general, but more particularly towards those worst of murderers—the killers of snakes.*

The married woman, whose longings to be a mother have proved vain, in spite of all her vows and her consultations of santons and sages, betakes her, as a last resource, to the aid of the black serpent; and she feels assured, that if she wears the dead body of one of those creatures next her skin for three days, she will not long be deprived of the honours of maternity. Very serious accidents have often resulted from this practice. Some years ago a considerable number of dark-coloured snakes, rendered torpid by cold, were carried down by the river to Caïffa, near Mount Carmel. When the circumstance was made known, all the married women of the district who were not blessed with children, flocked to the spot, to get themselves a snake for a girdle: but the snakes, many of which were venomous, were

* Traces of a similar belief in the terrible vindictiveness of the weasel tribe lingered in Ireland five-and-twenty years ago, and may still subsist there for aught we know. The writer of this well remembers a night of terror he passed in his early boyhood. He had been implicated in the crime of harrying a weasel's nest; and, though never prone to superstition, he was so wrought on by the awful things related to him, and by the contagious fears of a companion, that he was afraid to close his eyes, lest *the old weasel of all* should come and suck his blood or his breath while he slept.

only numbed; the warmth of the body revived them, and the lives of several of the women were greatly endangered by the bites they received. It is said that one unfortunate young woman, who had consented with extreme repugnance to employ this horrible remedy, was so terrified when she felt the cold pressure of the reviving reptile, as it writhed round her body, that she threw herself from the house-top and was killed on the spot.

When any one has been bitten by a serpent, the Syrians set it down for certain that the venomous creature had been provoked by the wounded man, or by some of his ancestors. But they have a sovereign remedy, which absorbs, as they assert, every particle of venom from the wound. This is nothing more or less than the application to the injured part of a small black or yellowish porous stone, of a sort rarely met with. A fragment of such a stone is always valued at a high price; but when a piece has acquired a certain reputation by the number of marvellous cures wrought by it, it then becomes worth its weight in gold. Madame Catafago, the wife of a wealthy merchant, is mistress of one of these stones: it is a small piece of great renown, and cost her 680 piastres, nearly seven pounds sterling.

Talking of strange remedies reminds me* that the ashes of playing-cards are the common recipe in Lebanon for the cure of intermittent fevers; and the more thumbed and greasy the cards the greater is their efficacy. The ashes are mixed up with water, and administered as a draught.

Cases of hydrophobia occur, though very rarely, in Syria. When the disease declares itself, a messenger must be instantly dispatched, and bring back, within three days from the first attack of the malady, a specific, the secret of which is known only to an old man of the village of Sheikh Akmar, three leagues from Acre. It is a violent drastic purgative, composed of simples gathered by the old hakkim himself. The Syrians assert that it is an infallible cure for hydrophobia; but with their usual proneness to the marvellous, they add that the first visible effect of the medicine is to relieve the patient of clots of blood, in which the forms of little dogs are plainly to be discerned. Strange as it may appear, most of the European families settled in the country put as much faith in these stories as the natives themselves. The whole Catafago family of Seyde and Nazareth bear testimony, as eye-witnesses, to the curious operation of this remedy.

When a Druse is attacked with hydrophobia he is seldom left to die of the disease, but the event is anticipated by those about him. They say that to cause the immediate death of the sufferer it is only necessary to sift some hot vine ashes on his bare and shaven crown.

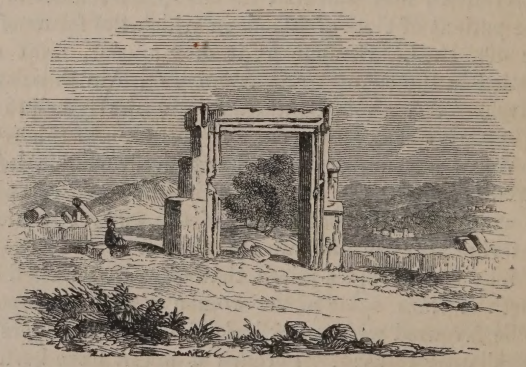
Irby and Mangles relate, that when they passed through Asdoud, a village north of Gaza, some of the women were very importunate in their entreaties to be favoured with a few locks from the travellers' heads. The request was ungallantly refused. Perhaps it might have been otherwise had the ladies desired the locks for love-tokens; but the fact was, they wanted them as a charm to add to the efficacy of some medicine the Franks had given them for a sick kinsman. The women said that the smoke of Christian hair, burnt while the medicine was warming, would ensure a cure of the patient's disorder. Some Arabs, to secure the hair, will take the head and all.

* Perrier.

About the town of Banias, near the source of the Jordan, grows a certain miraculous herb, which is greatly sought after by the Christians of the Syrian and Greek churches. It is found, they say, in a place where a sick man, who was cured by our Lord, erected a monument to his divine benefactor. A leaf of the plant applied to a wound is said instantly to stop the hæmorrhage, and to produce a perfect cure in two days.

Tartous and Ruad.

Tartous, the ancient Antaradus, perhaps also the ancient Orthosia, was formerly a bishop's see, in the province of Tyre. It is frequently mentioned in the history of the crusades as a place of great strength. The modern town, which seems little more than an agglomeration of ruins, is inclosed within a high wall, irregularly built of stone or marble, protected by a foss, which, in some parts, is cut in the solid rock. Passing the town wall, we lodged for the night upon a piece of turf beyond the arch of an old gateway, near to which are the ruins of a chapel or refectory of a convent, or perhaps those of a christian church, having several lancet windows remaining. There are also some remains close to the sea, on the north side of the town, where appeared to be the remains of a gateway leading to the port.



Ruins near Tortosa.

I left this place three hours after midnight, intending to reach Latakiah, if possible, that evening. The distance had been differently represented;

some calling it twelve hours, some fifteen, others eighteen, while by some it was stated at two days; and, according to the Arab mode of travelling, the last account proved to be correct; but all agreed in describing the road as infested by robbers, and very unsafe. The Anzeyry, who inhabit the low range of mountains parallel with the shore from the Nahr-el-Berd, north of Tripoli, to Latakiah, are held in the worst repute by all classes of men in Syria, as robbers and murderers. The myrtle grove near Tartous is particularly ill-famed as a frequent scene of their villanous exploits. As the day dawned and discovered the wild scenery of the shore, it gave the semblance of probability to the stories we had heard of the characters by whom it was frequented. Intersected by ravines, the sand produced different species of the erica, the arbutus, and the myrtle, of sufficient height to shelter any whose designs needed to be veiled. Descending a hill we arrived at a bridge of one large arch, over a rapid and deep torrent, called Nahr Hussein, which a short time before had spread over the neighbouring ground, carrying away the soil, tearing up the trees, and leaving the whitened pebbles to complete the aspect of desolation which reigned for a great distance round. The bridge had been so shaken by the swollen stream as to be impassable; and so, keeping down the left bank toward the sea, we with difficulty found a place where we could effect a passage. At nine we halted near a stream, and the nose-bags being hung on to the animals, we remained there an hour and breakfasted, keeping up an anxious look-out towards the thickets at the foot of the neighbouring mountains.

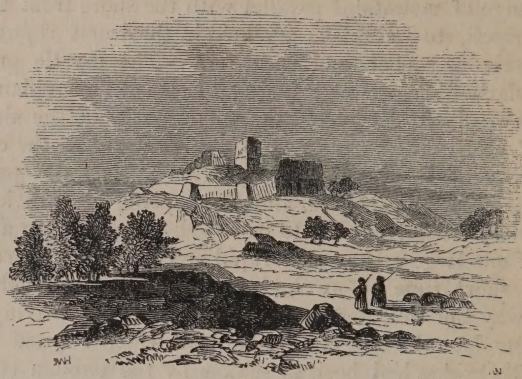
In the course of the morning we passed the Maronite village of Markab, perched upon an eminence on our right. The road kept a parallel line with the sea, generally at the distance of one or two miles, but sometimes along the shore. An hour north of the village of Markab is the great fortress of that name, a mile and a half in circumference, and crowning with its lofty and massive black walls and its two gigantic towers the summit of a steep and craggy off-shoot from the mountain range. The whole aspect of these half-ruined fortifications fills the mind with admiration and awe. An Arab writer asserts that the demon himself was pleased to exert his skill in strengthening that formidable stronghold of the Hospitallers, so much were the warriors of Saladin and Kelaoun dismayed by its appearance!

At three, P. M., having reached a fine pasture district, the northern boundary of the Aradian territory, where the mountains are two or three leagues from the sea, we entered a grove of myrtles in full flower. Soon after we passed near a small bay, where a number of Greek caïques employed in sponge-fishing were moored, while the sailors were diverting themselves on the beach.

The sponge-fishery belongs to some princes of Lebanon, who usually sell their rights to merchants. The divers, all Greeks of the Archipelago, arrive in their little vessels on the coast of Syria in the month of May, and the fishing continues until September. Their employment is an exceedingly laborious one, and not exempt from danger; but as they know that sharks haunt these coasts, they take due precautions against them, and accidents rarely happen. The constant working of the same banks is beginning to

diminish the quantity of sponges, and the fishery has been observed for some years to grow less and less productive.

It was half-past-five, P.M., when we reached Gebilee, a place celebrated in Egypt for the growth of mild and most fashionable tobacco: the Syrians themselves do not value it, but use in preference a much stronger kind. Latakiah being six hours distant, we settled ourselves upon some grass within the gate near the ruins of a Greek theatre. The whole tract from Tortosa to Gebilee exhibits ruins of castles and ancient sites, which testify that this country, though now its rich soil be very partially cultivated and thinly peopled, was once in the hands of a people that knew how to value it, and thought it worth defending.



Florita ruined Castle, near Tartous

Gebilee is one of the poorest towns on the coast; its port is only accessible to small boats. The only objects in the town to arrest the traveller's attention are, the mosque of Sultan Ibrahim, a saintly anchorite who lies buried there, and the theatre, before mentioned. The latter is on a large scale. The natives call it *El Kala* (the castle); and, with a fine hyperbole, they describe it as having formerly been of so prodigious a height that a horseman might have ridden at early morning a whole hour in its shade. Half the edifice still remains; its diameter is three hundred feet; two-thirds of the area are occupied with Arab huts. Some of the seats still remain entire, as well as the vaults, which run under the subsellia all round the theatre. The outer wall is three yards and three-quarters thick, and very solidly built with large stones.

We proceeded on our way next morning. The track lay through an unbroken myrtle coppice, at two miles from the sea, which was generally hidden from sight by a line of sand-hills near the shore. A few gazelles alarmed at our approach bounded through the myrtles, and reaching the top of one of the mounds, paused for an instant to survey the surrounding country, and then set forward again, following each other in a line; while, at a distance of eighty yards from our path, a wolf was seated under a bush, as if watching the movements of the little herd, some of which might have furnished his mid-day repast had not our appearance disturbed them. I should have fired at him, but that a shot would have attracted the notice of the Arabs whose tents were near, and from whom I was not ambitious of receiving any attentions.

Having crossed several streams during the morning, we reached the last

of them, the Nahr-el-Kebir (great river), fifty yards in width, at half an hour from Latakiah, and crossed it by a ford. Passing near the new mosque which stands upon an eminence above Latakiah, we brought up at the house of the British Vice-Consul.

Latakiah, which in the last century was one of the most flourishing cities on the coast, has been so frequently overthrown by earthquakes that one can scarcely move in it without everywhere encountering ruins and heaps of fallen materials. The ancient port of Laodicea, which, if history may be relied on, was capable of containing a thousand galleys, is now partly choked with sand, partly covered with orange, lemon, mulberry, and jujube trees, forming an extensive garden. If Dolabella could revisit Laodicea with his fleet, he and his Romans would assuredly be not a little surprised to find they could gather oranges and jujubes on the very spot where their war galleys formerly floated. The present harbour could not contain more than four or five vessels of a hundred and fifty or two hundred tons burthen, and a few Arab boats. It would not cost much to render the port of Latakiah a safe and commodious one for vessels of all sizes, and thus to supply the grand want of this coast—a harbour of refuge.

The air of this region is very wholesome; it is less confined than in some other parts of the coast—Tripoli for instance; for the mountains recede further from the sea, and towards the north the plain opens to a great extent. The water, however, is bad, and whilst everything without the town is verdant, fragrant, and picturesque, all within it is disgustingly filthy. The ill-paved streets of the Greek quarter, in particular, heaped with remains of dead animals and with filth of every kind, exhale an intolerable stench.

The Christians of Latakiah appear to be of a very lively temperament, and are fond of meeting socially together in the evenings to amuse each other with conversation and story-telling. The women often dance in the style (but without the indecency) of the Egyptian *almehs;* the men sing; and Karaguse, the Turkish Punch, exhibits his not very chaste performances.

Dancing Girl.

Having seen our traveller thus far on his way northward, we will now return to those we left at Eden. We shall overtake them at Bsherray, preparing to proceed towards the south.

CHAPTER XI.

JOURNEY SOUTHWARD, FROM THE CEDARS ALONG THE HEIGHTS OF LEBANON.—THE METUALIS.

LEAVING Bsherray, the fleecy clouds that had been hovering all the day on the heights of Lebanon began to sink lower and lower, and, as we* passed under Mar Serkis, completely concealed one of the lofty crosses that rise on the peaks of the mountain, while the other, encircled by them, appeared as if undergoing translation to heaven. We passed a bridge over the Kadisha, at the head of the Wady, and then proceeded westwards along the opposite or southern bank. On the other side of the valley we saw an immense roofless cavern,—a ravine, in fact, in the process of formation, the torrent not having completed the work of clearance. Between this and a vast gorge, in which stood the village of Hatsheit, descended a beautiful and very lofty waterfall from the very summit of the ravine.

We halted, after four hours' ride, nearly opposite Hatsheit, at Hartoun, a straggling village, like Eden, almost lost in its groves of mulberries. The houses are of stone, very large and substantial, without windows, and serving apparently each for several families. Here we pitched our tent and passed the night. Next morning the church bells, answering each other from opposite sides of the chasm, proclaimed the festa of St. Peter and St. Paul. No one was visible when we emerged from the tent; but just as we finished breakfast, the whole population issued from the churches, and collected under the mulberry trees, to witness our departure, and bid us good bye. After winding round the ravine, on the edge of which, overhanging the Great Wady, Hazroun stands, we commenced the ascent—at first very short and steep, then long and gentle—of the Southern Lebanon.

We passed through fine rocky scenery, but saw little cultivation, except in a plain which we passed at a great depth below us. This part of Lebanon is quite abandoned to pasturage. We passed two or three small camps of Arabs, the most barbarous I think I ever met with—no curiosity, no intelligence; they had a good many camels, sheep, and goats,—the sheep lugging after them huge tails that are seen all over Lebanon: these tails, like the humps of camels, are esteemed great delicacies in the Arab kitchen. I was astonished at seeing numerous camels and Arab huts so high up in the mountain. These Arabs pass the winter months on the sea-shore about Tripoli, Gebail, and Tartous. Though they have no fixed habitations, their features have not the true Bedouin cast, and their dialect, though different from that of the peasants, is not purely Bedouin.

After an hour and a half's steep and continual descent, we reached Akoura, a village beautifully situated among gardens of mulberries at the eastern extremity of the Wady Metuali, a very deep vale, which completely separates the mountain range we had just traversed from that on which Afka stands, which we saw directly in front as we descended into the Wady.

* Lord Lindsay.

Akoura has a bad name amongst the people of this country; its inhabitants, who are all Greek catholics, being accused of avarice and inhospitality. The mountaineers, when upon a journey, never think of spending a para for their eating, drinking, or lodging. On arriving in the evening at a village, they alight at the house of some acquaintance, if they have any, which is generally the case, and say to the owner, "*Jay deyfak*," I am your guest. The host gives the traveller a supper of milk, bread, and borgul; and if rich and liberal, feeds his mule or mare also. When the traveller has no acquaintance in the village, he alights at any house he pleases, ties up his beast, and smokes his pipe, till he receives a welcome from the master of the house, who makes it a point of honour to receive him as a friend, and to give him a supper. In the morning he departs with a simple "Good bye." Such is the general custom in these parts; the inhabitants of Akoura, however, are noted for refusing to receive travellers, to whom they will neither give a supper, nor sell them provisions for ready money; the consequence of which conduct is, that the Akourans, when travelling about, are obliged to conceal their origin, in order to obtain food on the road. When Burckhardt passed that way his guide had a friend at Akoura, but he happened to be absent when they called at his house; they therefore alighted at another house, where they obtained with much difficulty a little barley for their horses; and they must have gone supperless to bed had not Burckhardt repaired to the sheikh, and made him believe he was a Koord (his dress being somewhat in the fashion of that people), in the service of the Pasha of Damascus and on his way to the Emir Beshir. The confident way in which he spoke alarmed the sheikh, who sent the travellers a few loaves of bread and some cheese. On returning from his visit to the sheikh, Burckhardt found his guide in the midst of a large assembly of people abusing them for their meanness.

We rested and dined at Akoura, under a most magnificent walnut-tree, and then started for Afka, a village whose name is found in the ancient geography of Syria. Eusebius states, that between the coast and Heliopolis (Balbec) at *Aphaca*, among the heights of Lebanon, near a small lake, was a temple dedicated to "the foul fiend Venus, the seat of licentiousness, and the school of impurity." Lake Liemoun is at three hours' distance from Afka, and on its banks, Burckhardt conjectured, was probably the situation of the temple. That observant traveller's surmise has been confirmed by Doctor Hogg, who accidentally discovered the ruins, which had escaped the researches of all his predecessors. They lie in a rich but uncultivated valley, perhaps of two miles in length by one in breadth, forming a basin everywhere closed in by hills. There is a solitary cottage in the valley, thirty or forty yards from which a copious stream bursts from the gravelly soil, at the entrance of a deep cavern in the side of the mountain; and after dividing into two branches, one of which supplies a corn mill within the cottage, whilst the other encircles a large inclosure encumbered with ruins, it unites again into a considerable stream, and falls into the lake of Liemoun. The lake is shallow and of no great extent, but a wide gravelly strand proves that at some seasons its dimensions are greatly increased. According to Zosimus it was popularly believed that all offerings made at the shrine of

Aphaca, if acceptable to the Goddess, sank, however light, to the bottom of the lake; but whatever might be their nature and weight, they floated on the surface if displeasing to the divinity. This writer notices the destruction of the temple in the time of Constantine.

The ruins are in the centre of an area, forming a square of at least eighty paces across, bounded by a massive wall of well-hewn and well-placed stones, without mortar. From this external boundary, through which a large ruined gateway gives admission, the ground everywhere rises by a regular ascent to a mass of fallen materials, resting on a basement, elevated by three steps above the adjacent soil. This mass, we are told by the discoverer, exhibited fragments of Doric columns, pieces of entablature, and many other ponderous stones, thrown together in a confused heap, apparently by some sudden and violent shock. Here, then, were evidently the remains of an ancient temple. The portico had faced the entrance, and a wide flight of steps, connecting this entrance with the temple, was half buried beneath the shattered architrave and broken columns. Every part had been massive, and coarsely executed; the cella had consisted of five or six columns on each side, of large diameter,—the whole completely overthrown; but from the scattered fragments everywhere visible, the plan of the edifice, had time permitted, might have been accurately ascertained.*

Our way from Akoura to Afka wound round the head of the valley, under crags of most surpassing grandeur, one of them peculiarly noble, with a projecting ledge on one of its lower peaks, evidently designed by Nature for a Dive's or a Genie's castle.—I sighed for Aladdin's lamp! A torrent flows from under a large hemihexagonal cavern at the head of the vale under the rocks; we crossed it by a beautiful natural bridge, and soon afterwards, crossing the intermediate hills into a collateral wady, descended to Naitri, Nitri, or Minetri, (for they give it all these names), a village at its eastern extremity, inhabited by Metualis, a most uncourteous set. There we halted for the night. The reader who has accompanied us thus far will perhaps not be unwilling to halt with us, and hear some particulars respecting the Metualis, or Motualis, whose name has already occurred more than once in the preceding pages.

They are followers of Ali, as the Turks are of Omar; they therefore belong to the same great division of Islamism as the Persians and other *Shiites,* but there is something very peculiar in their tenets and usages that essentially distinguishes them from all the other believers in Ali. I† will relate what I have learned of them from the lips of their aged men, who take delight in explaining the old books that tell of their ancient might. Their history has for some centuries been identified with that of Syria, and there is scarcely a town, village, or hamlet in the country respecting which the Metualis have not some interesting legend or anecdote to recount. I felt an indescribable pleasure in hearing two old white-bearded Metualis describing their ancient glory, the power of their ancestors in Syria, and the wars of other days; and then speaking, with tears in their eyes, of their present low estate, the persecutions they suffered at the hand of the terrible Djezzar, and the final downfall of their nation.

* A Visit to Alexandria, Damascus, and Jerusalem, &c., by Edward Hogg, M.D. Lond. 1835.

† Perrier.

Some years before the civil wars began by Omar-el-Daher in the last century, the Metualis were still numerous and strong in Syria; their numbers were then at least double what they now are, and they were under the government of their own *macaïehs*, or district chiefs. After Omar-el-Daher was put down, this little nation, which had previously suffered severely, was beginning to recover from its disasters, when the terrible sway of Ahmed-Djezzar supervened, and completed its ruin.

After enduring intense oppression at the hands of the savage pasha, they at last took up arms in their own defence. They were successful at first; defeated Djezzar's troops in every engagement, and took several important fortresses in the *Belad Beshara*, perched like eyries on the tops of the scarped cliffs. The crafty pasha, finding that he could not prevail over them by mere force, contrived to gain over some of their chiefs by gold or promises, and to sow dissension among them. Ere long their operations became languid and ineffectual, and Djezzar had timely warning of all their designs through his spies. He soon had the upper hand; and he carried out his measures against the revolters with his usual vigour, impaling all that fell into his hands. He laid siege to the important fortress of Nabatieh with a force of 7000 men and three pieces of cannon. Some hundreds of the Metualis had shut themselves up in the fortress, which they defended with obstinate courage. The position of this important fortress is extraordinary and singularly romantic: built in the times of the crusades on an isolated cliff, which may be ascended on the western side by a steep flight of steps cut in the rock, it looks vertically down on the other three sides from a height of 900 feet on the river Kasmieh, the ancient Leontes. A few blocks of stone rolled upon the path on the only practicable side would be enough to baffle the attempts of a whole army. This was accordingly done by the besieged; but the traitors who were among them showed Djezzar a subterraneous passage which led under the gate of the fortress, and which the besieged had walled up.

Djezzar had two pieces of cannon brought by night into the subterraneous passage; a few shots were fired, and so tremendous was the report, reverberated and magnified by the rocky walls, that the Metualis believed the pasha had undermined the whole cliff, and was blowing it up. A panic seized them, and they surrendered, stipulating only that their lives should be spared. But Djezzar was not the man to be baulked of his vengeance by the faith of treaties—he beheaded most of his prisoners. As for the traitors who had enabled him to take the fortress, his avarice prompted him to deal them poetical justice, and he amused himself with seeing them hurled from the battlements into the Kasmieh. The capture of the fortresses, Nabatieh and El Shekef, gave the last blow to the power of the Metualis; they scattered and fled, and Djezzar had them hunted down like wild beasts. All that fell into his hands were impaled at the gates of Acre or Seyde; the greater part of their property was confiscated, and the authority of their *macaïehs* was thenceforth abolished. Thus was for ever destroyed the influence the Metualis were beginning to acquire, and which ranked next to that possessed by the Druses.

At present their numbers do not exceed from 40,000 to 43,000 souls: they

occupy, mingled with Christians, two hundred villages or more, in the southern part of Lebanon, and about its last ramifications. From a thousand to twelve hundred families reside in Balbec and its environs, such as the villages of Fijeh, Ras-el-Ain, &c., in the beautiful gorges of the Antilebanon.

The Metualis are brave and determined, but not in so high a degree as the Druses. Though prodigal in their liberality, and noted for the constant exercise of generous hospitality to strangers, still they seldom allow an individual of another religion to enter their houses, lest they should be defiled. If a person, not belonging to their own sect, touches a vessel or any other utensil of theirs, it becomes unclean by the contact, and must be broken, or else purified by fire or running water. To enable them to exercise hospitality without being defiled by their guests, they receive the latter in houses called *Mensools*, built expressly for the purpose in all their villages, and treat them there, and all their followers and their cattle, most bountifully and quite gratuitously. What is peculiarly strange in their prejudices on this head is, that they do not conceive themselves at all defiled by the constant intercourse they hold with aliens from their religion, *outside their own dwellings;* on the contrary when abroad, they freely eat, drink, and smoke with the Druses, Muslims, and Christians. It is only the presence of a stranger under their roofs, or even on the threshold of their doors, that renders the whole dwelling unclean. The effect is almost sure to be reciprocal, for nothing can be nastier than the domestic habits of the Metualis.*

The Metuali women have generally very fine figures, black eyes, large brown features, full of vivacity and expression, and thick tresses of jetty hair. In order to win the more favour in the eyes of their lords, they employ sundry means to increase the development of their ample busts. But with all their natural and artificial charms their appearance is not very captivating to the stranger, for cleanliness is not among their allurements. When abroad, they veil the whole face, but they are not so solicitious about the rest of their persons, being often very scantily clothed when at work a-field. On these occasions if they catch sight of a Christian or a Turk, they stoop down and tuck up their simple *jubeh*, or cotton robe, gathering it round their faces, thus suggesting a parallel for the old story of the scared ostrich thrusting its head into a bush. Ideas of modesty would seem to be conventional, like

* "Passing out of a gateway (in the ruins of Atleet), similar to the other at the opposite extremity of the wall, we crossed a marsh, and, remounting, were proceeding on our way, when some women were descried drawing water at a well near the track, and the day being hot, I desired my servant to ask if they would give me some to drink; but they refused the indulgence—one of them exclaiming, 'Shall I give water to a Christian, and make my pitcher filthy, so that I can use it no more for ever?' This happened within the precincts of Samaria, and was a proof of how little change the spirit of the people has undergone within the last eighteen centuries. These women were young and handsome, with full, dignified, and stately figures. A dark-coloured fillet bound the head, and, passing under the chin, left the face entirely uncovered.

"Not an hour after this, we observed another group similarly employed. 'Now,' said Ahmet, 'observe the difference; instead of Arabic, I will speak to them in Turkish.' He did so; and, picking up their vessels, they took to flight; but when he continued to pursue them with what I suspect was a volley of abuse, one of them came back trembling with her *bardac* (the earthen water-pot of the country), and we drank freely. She refused any reward."—Monro. These women appear to have been Metualis.

those of beauty, and subject to as variable rules. In Upper Egypt, above Siout, it is a common thing to see native women bathing in the river, and running up and down the banks in a state of complete nudity; but if a boat passes, or a man appears in sight, they squat down and cover their faces with their hands; for with them, modesty requires, above all things, that they should conceal their faces from the gaze of men. Notions of beauty are subject to the same conventional aberrations. Thus the Metualis alone, among the Arab races of Western Asia, are very partial to an excessive plumpness in their fair ones: it is in their estimation the type of superlative beauty. Perhaps they argue that if a woman be comely there cannot be too much of her. In his figurative language, a Metuali will say of a woman he loves, and whom he thinks surpassingly beautiful, "The soul of my soul has eyes black as the gazelle's; her mouth is a branch of coral; her skin a vessel of milk; and her face a full moon."

The Metualis use none but earthen vessels with spouts to drink out of; and they never employ the gracefully shaped vases generally used in Syria for cooling water by evaporation (like the *alcarrazas* of the Spaniards). The reason they allege is very curious; the water, they say, as it escapes through the little holes in these vessels, makes a sound that resembles the detested name of *Aboubeker*. For a similar reason, they avoid as much as possible to pronounce the word *abou*, father, and usually substitute for it the Turkish word *baba*, that they may not sully their lips with the first two syllables of an infamous name.

The Metualis still have governors called *macaïehs:* these men formerly possessed all the authority of emirs, and payed the tribute to the pasha of Acre; but at present they are mere heads of villages, with no recognised power.

When from home, the Metualis observe many of the outward practices of the Muslims. Their doctors or priests are called *aiummats* or first doctors. They recognise twelve imans as founders of their religion, the first of whom is Ali, and the rest his descendants to the eleventh generation. These imans they call the twelve doctors of the universe. All the Metualis look forward for the speedy coming of the *mouhdi* (guide) of the race of Ali. This messiah, or mouhdi, will rule over the whole world, and will put to a fearful death all those who shall have denied him; he will then glorify his own, and will execute the judgment of God in the land of the sanctuary.

The messiah they expect in common with many Persians is Mohammed el Mehdy (or Mouhdi), the twelfth and last of their imans, who suddenly disappeared, they say, after giving battle to the caliph of Babylon, near Karbela. The Turks, on the contrary, say, that the iman was slain in the engagement, and that his body was recognised on the field of battle. But, according to the belief of the Metualis and of a certain number of Persians, he was suddenly caught up and transported to Arabia, where he will one day appear triumphantly, re-establish the race of the imans on the throne, and slay all who shall have refused to own him. The Metualis give this messiah the name also of *Sahab-Zaman* (the master of time), because he is not dead, and because he disposes of time and stops it at his pleasure, till the moment arrives to make himself known as Mohammed's vicar.

Magnificent horses are always kept ready saddled and caparisoned, among the Metualis of Irak, in expectation of his return. No one ever mounts these chosen steeds, which are held in high veneration by the members of the sect. Several Metualis appropriate a part of their wealth to a reserved fund to be kept until the arrival of the mouhdi.

The first apostle of the Metuali sect who settled in Syria, was Abou-Abdallah-Mohammed, surnamed *el Cheid-el-ewel*, or the first martyr. He resided first in Jezin (nine leagues from Seyde), and, after making numerous converts there, he went and preached at Sarfend (the ancient Sarepta), where he was soon followed by such a host of disciples, that he was enabled to build seven great mosques in Jezin, three of which exist to this day. But the Damascus doctors, jealous of his popularity, challenged him to preach in that city, and to maintain a thesis against them. He fearlessly accepted the challenge, and so convincingly did he maintain the doctrine of the followers of Ali, that the baffled and mortified sunnite doctors, finding their logic at fault, had recourse to intrigue, excited the ignorant populace against their triumphant adversary, and had him condemned to be burned alive as an infidel and blasphemer. Abou-Abdallah-Mohammed was swathed in a cloth steeped in combustibles, tied to a plank, and burned by slow fire. Every year since that event on the day after the return of the hadj caravan from Mecca, the populace assemble in the streets to burn a plank wrapped up in pitched cloths, and as it consumes they heap imprecations on the family of Ali, and shout with all their might, "May Allah burn the plank and curse the followers of Ali!"

The descendants and votaries of Ali were cruelly persecuted under the caliph Mahonia and his son Yezid; by order of the latter, the iman Hussein was thrown into a wretched dungeon in Damascus, where he received only food and drink enough barely to support existence. The caliph wished to get rid of him by a lingering death, without incurring the opprobrium of bloodshed.

One day when the prisoner was suffering under the agonies of thirst, his groans excited the compassion of one of his guards named Huhr, who looking in through the loophole in the wall of the cell, asked the iman what he could do for him. "Give me a drop of water in the name of the prophet!" said Hussein. The soldier feared that he should commit a sin if he thus relieved the holy iman, whom he regarded as a misbeliever; but Hussein, perceiving his hesitation, told him with the accents of inspired authority that he should surely receive the blessings of paradise in return for that good deed. Upon this Huhr filled a vessel with water, and endeavoured to convey it through the loophole to the prisoner, who strove in vain to reach it, his hands being bound behind his back. The iman then begged the soldier to throw the water over his face and his bare breast, whilst he held his mouth open to catch a few drops if possible. This was done; and Hussein, grateful for the relief he felt when the water was dashed against his burning breast, said to his compassionate guard, "Rightly art thou named *Huhr;* thou shalt always be called *Huohr*, thou and thine, and never shall any demand of thine in thy need be refused thee." (*Huohr* means good, loyal, compassionate;—this is an instance of that playing on words which has always been so much in vogue in the East.)

Every individual who bears the name of Huhr or Huohr is now held in profound veneration among the Metualis, and has a right to obtain the fulfilment of all his requests. In memory of their iman's sufferings, the Metualis have retained to this day the custom of wearing their garments open on the chest, and of drinking without letting the vessel touch their lips. Should a few drops fall on the bare breast of the drinker, he would devoutly abstain from wiping them off, and would regard them as a most auspicious omen.

In that early disastrous period when the faces of Ali's faithful followers were black before their enemies, Mahonia, the son of Jezid, and his successor in the caleefat, appointed as his governor, or *eccumdar* of Arabia, one of his vizirs, named Hajash Ebn Yoosoof, a ferocious fanatic, who soon became the most cruel persecutor of the Metualis, and of all the descendants of Ali. One of his cruel amusements was to have trenches dug, in which he had all the Metualis he could lay hold on, men, women, and children, buried alive up to the middle, and there left to perish in lingering agony.

After having committed horrible atrocities in Irak, the cruel Hajash Ebn Yoosoof repaired to Damascus, by order of his master, to continue there his persecutions against the partisans of Ali, who had concealed themselves in that city. He immediately set the most active inquiries on foot, and succeeded in discovering the asylum of the iman, Zaïn-el-Abedin, (the star or the ornament of the devout). This Zaïn was the son of Hussein, the son of Hassan, the son of Ali, who had married Fatmeh, the daughter of the prophet, whose name he exalted.

Hajash had the holy iman brought before him; he could not offer him violence, nor put him publicly to death, because Zaïn-el-Abedin was of the race and lineage of Mohammed. Hajash, therefore, advanced to meet the saint, and treated him with every possible demonstration of respect, while at the same time he tried every crafty art to entrap him in conversation, by proposing to him all sorts of knotty questions, out of which he hoped would come some pretext for accusing his guest and causing him to be cast into prison. The iman Zaïn, who possessed the spirit of God, was soon aware of the malicious purpose of Hajash, whom he knew, moreover, to be the most sanguinary persecutor of the Metualis, and he was so wary in his responses as to baffle every attempt of the perfidious governor. Thus foiled in his first scheme, Hajash secretly caused certain trusty executioners of his will to be posted at all the gates of Damascus, to waylay Zaïn-el-Abedin when he should quit the city, and to kill him in some secret place. The *Dubaya* gate, or the gate of the Dyers, was alone left unguarded, as being very little frequented. Hajash, the better to mask his villanous intentions under a show of respect, offered the iman Zaïn a magnificent present, giving him the choice either of a beautiful white slave, or of a horse of the purest race, saddled and caparisoned, with a lance and all the equipments befitting a warrior, or of a purse containing a thousand pieces of gold. The white slave had been instructed by her master to employ all the arts of beauty in order to inveigle Zaïn, and make him choose her in preference to the other presents; but the iman said to her, "Damsel with the golden locks, thy smile is sweeter than honey; thine eyes are the light of the nightly Heavens;

thou art one of the hooris of paradise; but in these times of oppression, amidst the perils that in this palace impend over the head of Zaïn-el-Abedin, of what use couldst thou be to him?" Thus saying, he took the lance and the horse, and sprang into the saddle. Hajash, disconcerted by the iman's choice, cheered up again when he saw him take leave and set out on his departure; but just as he was quitting the palace, the iman turned back suddenly to the governor: "Hajash," he said, "which is the safest gate through which to quit Damascus in peace?" The sacred laws of hospitality peremptorily forbade Hajash to betray his guest into error or danger; he was therefore constrained, in spite of himself, to name to him the Dyers' Gate. Zaïn-el-Abedin passed through it unmolested, and made his way in security to Irak; from that time forth the gate was called Bab-el-Salam, the Gate of Safety, a name it retains to this day.

Volumes might be filled with the legends current among the Metualis respecting the towns and villages of Syria. Some of these are very interesting, but they would occupy too much space.

The Metualis have a horrible custom tolerated by the laws. In case of urgent need, the father is authorised to expose his own children for sale in the slave market, and instances are not rare in which this frightful privilege has been exercised. In the month of September, 1839, after the Syrian campaign, when the Egyptian government exacted all arrears of taxes with very great rigour, many girls from twelve to fifteen years of age were sold at Homs and Hamah by unfortunate Metualis of the district of Balbec. They were offered at prices varying from 1000 to 1200 piastres, but purchasers would not give so much; eleven were disposed of at Hamah, and seven at Homs, and fetched on an average from 700 to 900 piastres. Purchasers were deterred from bidding freely by the consideration that the father was entitled to redeem his children at the end of a year by paying back the purchase-money.

Several of the Metuali families were formerly of princely rank, and their members enjoyed all the authority of emirs. The Turkish pashas and governors have gradually despoiled them of their powers, and confiscated most of their property; but they have not found it so easy a task to divest them of the moral influence they possess among their brethren.

The oldest and most renowned Metuali families in Syria are, the Beit-el-Charfue, near Balbec, the Beit Shebib of Gazia, the Beit Eweilan, Beit Emir Canjar, &c. &c. Any member of one of these families can at his pleasure instantly raise some villages, and some hundreds of men, by the sole influence of his name, to maintain his personal quarrel.

Emir Canjar, the head of an ancient family in the neighbourhood of Balbec, underwent the indignity of being seized in the conscription of 1834 like a common peasant, and enrolled in the Egyptian army; but he soon contrived to desert and return home. Notwithstanding the severe orders of Ibrahim Pasha against all deserters, no steps were taken to recover possession of the emir's person; the governor pretended not to know what had become of him, for he was certain that if he sent his soldiers to seize him by force, it would provoke a serious insurrection.

Emir Canjar applied himself peaceably to his rural occupations, and abstained from all conduct that would excite the suspicion of the Egyptian government, as long as he saw it in a strong position: but as soon as the mountaineers of Lebanon began to stir, in the month of April, 1840, he threw off the mask, though the insurgents were not of his own religion. He had his private wrongs to avenge, and vengeance is the Metuali's most intense passion. Canjar put himself at the head of three or four hundred horsemen of his clan, and joined the insurgent Maronites, who were encamped before Beyroot. His name was famous throughout all Syria for courage, skill, and prodigious bodily strength, and he fully justified his reputation by the mischief he did the Egyptians. He cut off numerous convoys of provisions and other military supplies, and for a long time blockaded the road to Damascus. The first revolt of Lebanon was, however, put down in a few days by the extraordinary address and energy of Mohammed Ali: almost all the chiefs submitted, and humbly sued for pardon; but Canjar was not among the supplicants. He continued to wander about with his men through the most inaccessible regions of Lebanon, intercepting the couriers, and doing the Egyptians all the damage he could; and this course he continued unchecked till the allied fleet appeared before Beyroot. He was then one of the first to apply for arms, which he distributed among the inhabitants of his native village; and partly by persuasion, partly by force, he succeeded in bringing over some Maronite villages of the Kesrouan to the Turkish cause. He played an important part in the last decisive events that led to the expulsion of Ibrahim Pasha from Syria, and he contributed more than any other chief to the general insurrection of the mountaineers of Lebanon.

The famous Metuali chief, Hussein-el-Shibib, surnamed Mollem-el-Haos (master of the rifle-shot), had made himself notorious in 1839 by unparalleled acts of ferocity as a highway robber, having been exasperated beyond measure by Egyptian violence and tyranny. For more than four months he infested the road between Acre and Beyroot, butchering all he could lay his hands on, not excepting the poorest travellers. His usual retreat was the ruined fortress of Medjel Ziwouin, situated on an almost inaccessible escarpment, two leagues and a half from Sour. There, perched like a hawk on the watch for quarry, he waited the appearance of travellers on the road, and when he descried them, he ran to meet them at the White Cape, near Nakoura. Once hemmed in within that scarped pass, the victims could by no possibility escape, for the road was a mere ledge on the perpendicular face of a rocky wall, with the sea dashing more than two hundred feet beneath it. The miscreant put them to every species of torture that savage ingenuity could devise; and when he was tired of the sport, he pitched their mangled bodies into the sea, and their beasts with them. Twice were some companies of Egyptian soldiers sent in pursuit of him; but when they rashly ventured into the perilous defile, a shower of balls fell upon them like hail from the heights, whilst they themselves were unable to use their arms against their invisible assailants. Scarcely a day passed in which Hussein did not, just at the moment when he was thought to be far away, pounce like a bird of prey on some village, havoc and plunder it, slaughter the cattle of the

inhabitants, and then escape with his booty to his rocky fastness. It was necessary to send out a considerable expedition to destroy his gang. Emir Mahmood, the grandson of the Emir Beshir, surrounded the mountain with some thousand men, whilst all the neighbouring valleys were occupied by cavalry; but Hussein's amazing audacity was triumphant even against such odds. Posting a small part of his band in an advantageous position, he made them keep up a constant fire upon the emir's forces, whilst he himself stole round alone in another direction, crawling like a panther from rock to rock, till he was within a little distance of the enemy. Concealed by a projection of the rock, he could select his mark, and six Maronite chiefs fell successively, shot through the forehead, as they were leading on their men. Their followers soon recognised the handiwork of the terrible Mollem-el-Haos, and fell back for a moment. This favoured Hussein's escape; he dispersed his men, and made them run each his own way; and no more than five of them were taken, who were massacred on the spot. After many acts of similar daring, after having thrice made his way singly by night into the midst of the Maronites' bivouac, and cut the throats of several among them, Hussein was compelled to give way and seek his safety in flight. But a price had been set on his head by Sherif Pasha. The brigand fled to the Haouran, intending to take refuge in the Ledja, at all times the secure asylum of all the outlaws of Syria. He had all but reached the place when he was imprudent enough to demand hospitality of an acquaintance, the Christian sheikh of a village in the Haouran. The temptation of the promised reward, and the desire of appropriating the large sums Hussein carried with him, were too strong for the sheikh's sense of the sacred duties of hospitality. In the middle of the night Hussein found himself surrounded by Bedouins—disarmed, bound hand and foot, in spite of his frantic resistance, and carried to Damascus. After he had been bastinadoed without mercy by order of Sherif Pasha, his head was cut off at the gate of the Meidan, on the same spot where his cousin, the Emir Joad, the chief of the Balbec insurgents, had been executed a few days before, and where his head was still exposed.

A thousand similar examples might be adduced in evidence of the savage character of the Metualis—dull, quiet, and servile men in appearance,—but who, when goaded by the sense of wrong or insult, display the ferocity of the tiger.

An hour beyond Afka we passed through a high level country still on the western side of the summit of the mountain. This district, called Watty-el-Bordj, from a small ruined tower, is three or four hours in length and two in breadth. In the spring the Abid Arabs, Turkomans, and Koords, pasture their cattle there. The latter annually bring large flocks of sheep (from twenty to thirty thousand in Burckhardt's time) into Syria, from the mountains of Koordistan; the greater part of which are consumed by Aleppo, Damascus, and the mountain districts, as Syria does not produce a sufficient number for its inhabitants. The Koord sheep are larger than those of Syria, but their flesh is less esteemed. The Koord sheep-dealers first visit with their flocks Aleppo, then Hama, Homs, and Balbec; and what they do not

sell on the road, they bring to pasture at Watty-el-Bordj, whither the people of Zakhle, Deir-el-Kammar, and other towns in the mountains repair, and buy up thousands of them, which they afterwards sell in retail to the peasants of the mountains. The mountaineers of the Druse and Maronite districts breed very few sheep, and very seldom eat animal food. On the approach of the respective great festivals, (Christmas with the Maronites, and Ramadan with the Druses,) each head of a family kills one or two sheep; during the rest of the year he feeds his people on borgul, with occasionally some old cow's or goat's flesh. It is only in the largest mountain towns of the Druses and Maronites that flesh is brought daily to market.

There are no springs of water in the Watty-el-Bordj; but the melting of the snow in the spring affords drink for men and cattle, and snow water is often found during the greater part of summer in some funnel-shaped holes formed in the ground by the snow. The plain affords excellent pasturage; in many spots it is overgrown with trees, mostly oaks, and the barberry is also very frequent. Partridges rose before us at every step.

Four hours from Afka, we entered on a bleak and stony portion of the mountain which is considered as belonging to the Kesrouan; and after two hours' ascent we came to a spring called Ain Naena, and there we turned S.W., striking into a route much frequented by the people of Kesrouan, who convey the iron ore of Shouair to the mesbek or smelting furnaces of Nebac-el-Mauradi, Shouair affording no fuel for smelting. The ore is carried on the backs of mules and asses, one day's journey and half to the mesbek, where the mountain abounds in oak. The remainder of our journey until we arrived again in Beyroot needs not be described.

CHAPTER XII.

The Druses.

The Druses constitute, if not the most numerous, certainly the most courageous population in Lebanon, and the most warlike body of men in Syria. Everything belonging to this singular little nation is calculated to excite curiosity and interest,—its manners and customs, its bravery, its rare stability of character, and, above all, the mystery that has so long hung over its moral history, and which has only begun to be penetrated within a very few years past. Even at this day it is not easy to speak positively and precisely of the Druse doctrines; and though some of their religious books found their way long ago into Europe, and several of them fell into the hands of the Egyptian soldiery during the last insurrections against the authority of Mohammed Ali, these have not fulfilled the hopes founded upon them of arriving at a complete knowledge of the principles and practice of the Druse religion.

The Druses occupy the southern portion of Lebanon, the western slopes of Antilebanon, and the Jebel Sheikh. There are 37 large towns and villages

in Lebannon inhabited solely by Druses, and 211 villages of Druses mingled with Christians. In Antilebanon there are 69 villages or towns belonging exclusively to the Druses; and there are several others having a mixed population of Druses, Maronites, and schismatic Greeks.

Ammatur and Bachlin in Lebanon, Hasbeya and Rasheya in Antilebanon, are capitals as it were, regarded by the Druses in the same light as Jerusalem was by the Jews, and Samaria by the kingdom of Israel. Each of these towns is a rallying point for the nation, and possesses a religious edifice (khalueh), in which are deposited their sacred books and their war standards.

In the last century 500 or 600 Druse families withdrew to the mountains of the Haouran, on the borders of the desert. This emigration began in the year 1757, the same in which the civil wars began of Sheykh Omar-el-Daher.

Like all the other races of Syria, the Druses are distinguishable by a peculiar cast of features: the people of the country recognise a Druse, a Metuali, &c., at the first glance, as easily as the children in our streets do a Jew. The physiognomy of the Druse is noble, grave, and sometimes even characterised by an expression of high spirit not untinctured with ferocity. In general, without being remarkable for tall stature, the men are well made, active, muscular, and possessed of extraordinary powers of endurance. Their square well-knit frames betoken great vigour, and to this they add the most dauntless intrepidity. Their women, of whom they are exceedingly jealous, are taller in proportion than the men, with fine figures, and clear rosy white complexions, such as would not disgrace the healthiest lass that ever brushed the dew from English lawn, or Highland heather. Among them may be found many heads displaying that superb character of beauty, almost unknown in Europe, — luxuriant raven hair, and eyes of the purest blue, with jet black brows and lashes.

Druse Female.

The character of the Druses is somewhat hard to define. Haughty, sanguinary, and vindictive by nature, they conceal these defects under an

exquisite suavity of demeanour, and they fairly compensate for them by their unbounded hospitality, generosity, and loftiness of soul. Their code of morals is extremely rigid, and the greatest good faith prevails in their mutual dealings; their word, once passed, becomes a sacred oath as binding as the most solemn legal contract. No people are more nice than they upon the point of honour; with them the least insult is instantly requited with the khanjar, or the rifle; whereas, among the people of the plains, it only provokes abusive retorts. From this delicate susceptibility has arisen among them that politeness of manner, which a gentleman, with the prejudices of his European education not yet modified by much contact with Orientals, is astonished to discover among peasants. It is carried even to dissimulation and falsehood, especially among the chiefs, whose greater interests demand a greater wariness of speech and conduct. Circumspection is imperatively requisite where retaliation is so prompt and so formidable.*

We must not omit stating *per contra* that, according to Burckhardt, the Druse is thus nice only in the defence of his public honour, and that he will tamely submit to injurious treatment, and even to blows, if there be no witnesses of his disgrace. The Syrians, too, say that the good faith observed by the Druses, as regards each other, does not govern them in their transactions with men of other sects, towards whom their religion teaches them it is no sin to violate the most solemn engagements. But both these assertions appear exaggerated and to need further investigation.

Though the Druses inhabit many villages in common with the Christians, they have little intercourse with the latter, never enter into family alliances with them, and hold them in sovereign contempt. Still, the outward harmony between the two classes is seldom disturbed by any open broils. The Druses despise the Franks; and the worst insult one Druse can offer to another, is the exclamation, "May God put a hat on you!" Yet these very people are unbounded in their kindness to the Frank stranger who claims their hospitality. Their national character is, in truth, a compound of seemingly contradictory principles, and cannot be fairly estimated from the hasty inductions travellers have drawn from partial observation or hearsay. A general disregard of religious observances would naturally render the Druses hateful to fanatics of all persuasions; and, surrounded as they are on every side by zealous professors of other creeds, it cannot excite surprise that they should be made the subjects of misrepresentation and calumny.

These men carry the virtue of hospitality to a romantic pitch. Whoever presents himself at their doors as a suppliant or a wayfarer, is sure of being entertained with lodging and food in the most generous and unaffected manner. "I have often," says Volney, "seen the lowest peasants give the last morsel of bread they had in their houses to the hungry traveller; and when I observed to them that they wanted prudence, their answer was, 'God is bountiful and great, and all men are brethren.'" When they have once contracted with their guest the sacred engagement of bread and salt, no subsequent event can make them violate it. Many instances of this are related to their honour. An Aga of the Janissaries, having been engaged in a rebellion towards the close of the eighteenth century, fled from Damascus, and

* Perrier. Volney.

retired among the Druses. The pasha was informed of this, and demanded him of the emir, threatening to make war on the latter in case of refusal. The emir demanded him of the sheikh Talhook, who had received him; but the latter indignantly replied, "When have you known the Druses deliver up their guests? Tell the emir that as long as Talhook shall preserve his beard, not a hair of the head of his suppliant shall fall." The emir threatened him with force: Talhook armed his family. The emir, dreading a revolt, adopted a method practised as juridical in that country: he declared to the sheikh, that he would cut down fifty of his mulberry trees daily until the aga were given up. He proceeded as far as a thousand, and Talhook still remained inflexible. At length, the other sheikhs became incensed and took up the quarrel, and the commotion was about to become general, when the Aga reproaching himself with being the cause of so much mischief, made his escape without the knowledge even of Talhook.*

The Maronites are far more numerous than the Druses; the former could bring into the field more than 30,000 men of their own body; but they could not stand against the Druses, who, though inferior to them in numbers, are far more martial. The moral influence exercised by this people over the other mountaineers is almost incredible. Despite the pride of the old Christian families, despite their religious antipathies, the Maronites have been forced to submit to a sort of vassalage to the Druses; that is to say, they take sides with the several factions into which the latter are divided, and share in feuds that in no wise concern their own interests. Thus the great Maronite family of *Beit-el-Kasim* has allied itself with the *Jimbelats*, not thinking itself sufficiently secure in its own strength, or by its great influence in the wholly Christian provinces of Bsherray and Kesrouan.

In the ordinary relations of life, apart from all religious concerns, the Druses are divided into three very distinct classes:—the *emirs* or princes, tolerably numerous; the *sheikhs*, a sort of hereditary nobility or gentry, and the *zalemats*, or peasants. The Emir Beshir Shehab, in writing to an emir, was bound to send him a whole sheet of paper, and could not address otherwise than by the customary form, *Genap adera lac el azis*, which may be thus interpreted; *Our dear honour and thy excellency.* The proper expression for addressing a sheikh was *Adera lac el azis* (*our dear honour*), but the sheikh was only entitled to half a sheet of paper. The mere zalemat or Druse yeoman could only claim a quarter sheet, with the form *Our dear.* All these usages were invariable, and the prince could not depart from them.

The Druses have long been divided into numerous factions, often at war with each other, but which always unite when there is a common foe to fight. All Syria was formerly divided into two great parties, the *Kess*, whose emblem was the red anemone, and the *Yesmenis*, who chose the white poppy for their cognizance. Both had their partisans among the Druses, many powerful families siding with the one or the other, rather at the instigation of their own warlike natures, than for any substantial reasons. Though the old distinctions of the Kess and Yesmenis subsist no longer among the Druses, still the influential families that formerly belonged to either party have ever since remained at variance.

* Volney.

When war is resolved on, every man, whether sheikh or peasant, able to bear arms, is called on to march. He takes with him a little bag of flour, a musket, some bullets, and a small quantity of powder made in his village, and repairs to the appointed rendezvous. If it be a civil war, each man rallies round the standard of his chief. A strict spirit of clanship prevails in Syria, and, above all, in Lebanon. The father bequeaths his opinions and his party to his son; and there is hardly an example of a Maronite or a Druse espousing a quarrel or adopting a party other than that of his ancestors. In civil feuds the incensed adversaries often seem on the point of proceeding to the last extremities; but they seldom engage in mortal strife; mediators always interpose, and the quarrel is appeased the more readily, as each patron is obliged to provide his followers with provisions and ammunition.

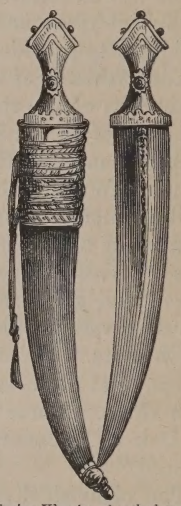
The gathering of the clans, as described by Volney, an eye-witness, forcibly reminds us of the speeding of the fiery cross in former days along the braes and glens of Scotland. "When the emir and sheikhs had determined on war at Deir-el-Kammar, criers went up at night to the summits of the cliffs, and cried aloud, 'To war! to war! Take your guns—take your pistols! Noble sheikhs, mount your horses: arm yourselves with the lance and the sabre: rendezvous to-morrow, at Deir-el-Kammar. Zeal of God! Zeal of combats!' This summons, heard in the neighbouring villages, was repeated there; and as the whole country is nothing but a chain of lofty mountains and deep valleys, the proclamation passed through its length and breadth in a few hours. These cries, from the stillness of the night, the long-resounding echoes, and the nature of the subject, had something awful and terrible in their effect. Three days after, fifteen thousand armed men were assembled at Deir-el-Kammar, and operations might have been immediately commenced."

The clannish disposition of this people, and their hereditary feud, make them averse to form matrimonial alliances out of their own families. They invariably prefer their relation, though indigent, to a rich stranger; and poor peasants have been known to refuse their daughters to wealthy and thriving merchants of Beyroot and Seyde. They observe, also, to a certain extent, the custom of the Hebrews, which directed that a brother should wed his brother's widow: but this is not peculiar to them, but one of many ancient usages which they retain, in common with other inhabitants of Syria, and all the Arab tribes.

Druse Woman and Child.

The Druses take but one wife: their young men usually marry at the age of sixteen or eighteen, and the girls at thirteen or fourteen. Three days before that fixed for the celebration of the marriage, the bridegroom,

accompanied by some young men of his own age, all well armed, proceeds formally to demand his bride at the hand of her father, who awaits the party, armed *cap-à-pié*, on the threshold of his door; and there gives his final sanction to the conditions of the contract. The young man fixes the dowry (*maahr*) to be settled by him on his intended, and promises her family that he will render her happy. The betrothed girl appears for a moment, but closely veiled, and accompanied by some female relations, and by her mother, who guarantees the unblemished honour of her child. Upon this the young man pops the question to the fair one herself, who replies *ueble tak*, (I accept you,) presenting him at the same time with a khanjar, sewed up in a red-and-white handkerchief, or *kefieh*, generally of wool, and wrought with her own hands. The khanjar is a token of the protection she expects from her husband; but it is likewise the instrument destined to expiate her guilt, if she has trifled with her maiden honour, or if she ever violate her marriage troth, or even fail in her duty as an obedient and duteous wife.



Syrian Khanjar, sheathed and naked.

All parties then enter the house; the bride afterwards proceeds slowly to the bath where she spends the day with her companions; whilst the men mount their horses and amuse themselves with their favourite games, or remain smoking and drinking coffee in the house of the bride's father: the same ceremony is twice repeated. On the wedding-night, the women conduct the bridegroom to the nuptial chamber, where the bride awaits him covered from head to foot with a red veil spangled with gold; removing this, he presents her with the tantoor, and places it on her head, where it is to remain for the rest of her life. The moment the husband snatches off the veil, the women run out of the room screaming, or rather gabbling very like turkeys. This is the signal for the commencement of a tremendous uproar in the house: the women never leave off screaming and gabbling in their own apartment for several hours, and the men assembled in another room perform the *dance of arms*. They caper about and put themselves into all sorts of ludicrous attitudes, clashing their sabres or their yataghans together, and feigning to be in a towering passion. All this hubbub is made to drive away the jins and the evil spirits, who are thought to be particularly busy about the house on such occasions.

Every Druse possesses an absolute and uncontrolled power to repudiate his wife on paying the stipulated dowry: nothing can be simpler than the form of pronouncing her divorce; it is enough that the husband show her the door and say, "Go!" Nay, if a wife asks permission of her husband to make a visit to her relations, and he grants it without adding an injunction to her to return, even that omission is tantamount to a divorce.* But, notwithstanding this facility, divorces are not frequent among the Druses,

* Burckhardt.

and hardly ever occur without grave reasons. The woman who is convicted of conjugal infidelity is invariably punished with death, not by her husband, who only sends her back to her relations with the khanjar he received from her when they married, but by her relations themselves: her guilt reflects shame not on him but on them, for *dishonour follows the line of blood*, say the Druses, and does not devolve on a man or on a family of other blood. The khanjar sent back without its sheath apprises the family of their disgrace. Upon this the father and the brother of the guilty woman assemble at the husband's house to investigate the case: if proofs be wanting, the husband's oath is held sufficient: the relations on their return home put the unhappy woman to death. Usually they cut off her head, and send her tantoor to the husband with a lock of her hair dyed in her blood, as a proof that justice has had its course. The more a father loves his daughter the less hope she can have of pardon. An execution of this kind took place in 1839 in a small Druse village near Jeyzin. The victim, who was hardly fourteen years of age, was put to death in a council of her kindred: her eldest brother was her executioner. Her mother and sisters, shut up in an adjoining apartment, in vain appealed for mercy with shrieks of despair; nothing could soften the inexorable brothers, not even the pardon granted by the aged father of the culprit. As for the accomplice of her guilt, he instantly disappeared and was never more heard of. The rumour was industriously propagated, that he had fled to Turkey to escape the chastisement of a severe bastinado, to which he had made himself liable: but the neighbours and the inhabitants of the village were not deceived by this report. They knew that the torrents that roll near Jeyzin are deep, and that the caverns of the mountains are mute as the grave.*

Druses.

Death is likewise the fate of the unmarried girl who has forfeited her honour; in this case only the father may grant forgiveness, if he has no other children: brothers are always implacable. The pashas and governors of Syria cautiously abstain from interfering with the right assumed by families thus to avenge the jealous honour of their blood.

The Druses are perhaps the only people who do not love music, vocal or instrumental: rarely if ever is the ballad, or legendary song, or mountain air heard in their cottages, or at their festivals: they have no sort of musical instruments,† and they march to battle without trumpet, pipe, or song. Their pleasures are very simple: in the evening they sometimes assemble in the court-yard or house of the chief of the village or family. "There," says

* Perrier. † Burckhardt.

Volney, "seated in a circle with legs crossed, pipes in their mouths, and poniards in their belts, they discourse of their various labours, the scarcity or plenty of their harvests, peace or war, the conduct of the Emir, or the amount of the taxes; they relate past transactions, discuss present interests, and form conjectures on the future. Their children, tired with play, come frequently to listen; and a stranger is surprised to hear them, at ten or twelve years old, recounting, with a serious air, why Djezzar declared war against the Emir Yousef, how many purses it cost that prince, what augmentation there will be of the miri, how many muskets there were in the camp, and who had the best mare."—This was written sixty years' ago: there are other persons and things than Djezzar and his wars to talk of in the mountains at the present day; but, making allowance for such changes, the general truth of the picture remains unaltered.

Burckhardt says the Druses are extremely fond of raw meat: whenever a sheep is killed, the raw liver, heart, &c., are considered dainties: the Christians follow the example, but improve upon it by the addition of a glass of brandy with every slice of meat. In many parts of Syria the common people eat raw meat in their favourite dish the kobbes; the women especially indulge in this luxury.

The *khaluehs*, or religious edifices of the nation, are buildings of the most unpretending kind, both within and without. Their internal decorations consist merely of a rush mat, and a basin of running water. The walls of some of them are covered with grotesque figures in various colours, arranged without any apparent order; they have probably some meaning for the initiated, but to a stranger they appear neither better nor more intelligible than the efforts of spontaneous art that sometimes adorn the walls of a school-room or a beer shop in England. As regards religion the whole body of the nation is divided into two classes; the *ackals*, or men of learning, the initiated, and the *djahels*, the ignorant and simple. The former alone frequent the khaluehs, whereas the djahels seem to be dispensed from the performance of any kind of worship or religious rite whatever. Some of the women are also initiated, and are called *acclats*, that is modest; but they cannot enjoy this privilege until they have attained a certain age. They are not admitted to a knowledge of all the mysteries, and they are always closely veiled in the khalueh. Any man of good repute may aspire to become one of the ackals, no matter how inferior may be his civil condition. The ackals are distinguished by their white dress and a turban peculiarly folded; they are not permitted to wear any article of silk or gold, or to smoke tobacco; they never swear, and are very reserved in their manners and conversation. There are probably different degrees of initiation among them: Burckhardt saw akoul boys of eight or ten years of age, from whom certainly nothing very difficult to be done could be expected, and who were not likely to be made the depositaries of any very important secret. "I have seen," he says, "akouls of that age, whose fathers were not of the order, because, as they told me, they could not abstain from smoking and swearing."

Like many other heterodox sects, subjected to Muslim sway, the Druses found it expedient from the very first, and indeed necessary to their self-

preservation, to stoop to dissimulation. They have express warrant for this in their religious books, which say, "Embrace the religion of those who have power over you; for such is the pleasure of our Maoula, till he to whom the best times are known, shall unsheath the sword and display the power of his unity." Acting on this principle, the Druses affect in public to speak well of all religions. Outwardly they are professors of Islamism, and they perform all the rites prescribed by it whenever they mix with Mohammedans. In private, however, they break the fast of the Ramadan, curse Mohammed, indulge in wine, and eat food forbidden by the Koran. Some of them feign a great veneration for *Kadra Mariana*, the Virgin Mary, in order to gain favour with their Christian neighbours. If you press them closely to tell you what are their real notions of religion, their answer is invariably, "God alone sounds the depths of the heart of the believers in his law; but men may be deceived by outward appearances."

It is almost superfluous to remark of men so indifferent as to religious matters, that they evince no disposition to make proselytes. But if they do not seek to spread their tenets through other lands, they are yet persuaded that numbers of their co-religionists exist, unknown, in various countries of the world, above all, in China! There are ackals, they say, in the mountains of Scotland, as sage and pure as any in Lebanon; only their European brethren are compelled by the fear of persecution to assume the outward appearance of Christianity, as they themselves do those of Mohammedanism. From the description they give of the habits and practices of these supposed Druses of the West, more especially their manner of burying the dead, it seems evident that they allude to the order of the Templars, which they believe still to exist in *Jebel-el-Scouzia*, the Scottish Highlands.

Some among them even lay claim to a European origin, and pretend to be descended from the French. The agents of the French government availed themselves of this notion with considerable effect during the troubles that immediately preceded the expulsion of the Egyptians from Syria by the allied forces.* The prevalence of this opinion among Europeans, and its eager adoption by the Druses, is accounted for in the following way:—

The renowned Druse Fakr-ed-Deen, in whose family the supreme chieftainship was vested, ruled over the mountain tribes during the early part of the seventeenth century. He at length extended his sway throughout the whole district between Tripoli and Sidon; and it was only after a long and successful career, during which he introduced a great degree of civilisation into the mountains, that he fell at last a victim to the jealousy of the Ottoman government. His family soon afterwards became extinct, and the Shehab were elected, by popular consent, to succeed it.

When threatened by a formidable armament sent against him by the Porte, Fakr-ed-Deen, who had formed connections at the court of the Medici in Florence, repaired thither in person to solicit aid. The arrival of an oriental prince in Italy did not fail to attract the public attention, and the origin of the Druses became a popular topic of research. The conclusion was speedily arrived at, that a people who had taken refuge in the mountains, and who were hostile to the Mohammedans, could be no other than the

* This is stated in the official report of the French consul, M. Desméloises.

offspring of the Crusaders. Fakr-ed-Deen seeing how favourable to his views was this idle conceit, took care to encourage it, and was artful enough to pretend that he was related to the house of Lorraine. The learned in etymology, struck with the resemblance of the names, insisted that *Druse* and *Dreux* must be the same word; and on this foundation they built their system of a pretended colony of French crusaders, who, under the conduct of a Comte *de Dreux*, had formed a settlement in Lebanon. This hypothesis, however, is completely refuted by the fact, that the name of the Druses is to be found in the Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, who travelled before the time of the crusades.

The truth is, you meet with traces of the Franks, reminiscences of the crusaders, everywhere in Syria; but, while the Bekaris, or descendants of Abubekr, are still flourishing in Damascus, as well as the houses of many of the companions of Mohammed, the descendants of the great Syria-Norman families have sunk generally into mere *fellahs*, or cultivating Arabs. Some few exceptions there may be. A Frank traveller some years ago discovered, on examining a bundle of old parchments in the possession of a village sheikh, that the owner was the descendant of one of the oldest crusading families in France. Ignorance would have been bliss in his case, poor old man! He started forth on a pilgrimage to Paris, and got as far as Alexandria; but falling ill there, and other obstructions being cast in his way by a kind Providence, he returned to his village, Gausta, and was living there in extreme old age in the year 1835.*

The founder of the Druse religion was the Caliph Hakem-Bi-Amr-Allah, the third of the Fatemites, who became caliph of Cairo in the year of the Hegira, 386, or A. D. 996, when little more than a child. His reign was distinguished by the most ridiculous extravagances; he forbade women ever to go out of doors, and prohibited workmen from making any kind of foot-gear for their use, on pain of death; all the necessary supplies were to be conveyed to them through loop-holes in the walls, by means of long poles, so that none might ever see them. Not content with these follies, the caliph chose to make himself God, and he gave orders that public registers should be opened for the purpose of enrolling the names of all who were willing to recognise his divinity. Fear or adulation filled the register in a few days with 16,000 names; whereupon the madman proclaimed himself an incarnation of God, and the founder of a new religion, which was altogether to supersede that of Mohammed. At last after an execrable reign of four-and-twenty years, he was murdered by his minister Hamzi, who became the continuator of the religion begun by Bi-Amr-Allah, and changed that name, which signifies *governing by order of God*, into Hakem-Bi-Amri, *governing by his own order*.

The succeeding caliphs persecuted those who were stupid enough to believe in the divine character of such a monster. Several of the sect fled to Syria, and there they propagated their doctrines, and soon became a strong and bold people. The ground, in fact, was already prepared to receive the seed they cast upon it. The mystical doctrines of Hakem Burka, "the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan" (A.D. 771), and those of Karmath (A.D. 891),

* Lord Lindsay.

had already been widely spread in Syria, and had formed a fit basis for the superstructure of transcendental folly reared by the founders of many sects now existing in that country. Much as the Druses, Metualis, Anzeyrys, Ismeylis, Yezidis, &c., differ from each other, still there is a family resemblance pervading their habits and ways of thinking, as well as those, too, of the terrible Assassins, that clearly points to a common origin. But to the honour of the Druses be it said, their mysticism, however extravagant, has not carried them, like some of the other sects, to the horrible excess of abrogating the moral law. The Karmathians were a sort of Oriental Muggletonians, who held that faith and knowledge raised men above all distinctions of right and wrong, and the Anzeyrys appear fully to have embraced that opinion; not so the Druses, whose moral character, all things considered, is deserving of high praise.

The leading doctrines of Hakem Burka were the transmigration of souls, and the unity of God; but, at the same time, the transfusion of that sole godhead into the person of Adam the first man, into those of the prophets, and of many great men who had appeared at various epochs, and lastly into the person of him, Hakem, the last personification of God. All this is nearly identical with the fundamental doctrines of the Druse creed; and as Hamzi-Ben-Ahmed, the vizier of the impious Caireen caliph, was a Persian, we are not unwarranted in supposing that he borrowed from Hakem Burka those notions which he suggested to his master, and on which he himself continued to act after the violent death of the caliph.

It is scarcely possible to arrive at a knowledge of the present tenets of the Druses: several of their religious books have been translated by those into whose hands they were thrown by the chance of war; but little can be learned from them, for they are full of cabalistic signs, broken sentences, and disjointed, unintelligible phrases. None but an ackal can ever disclose the mystery, but there are no religious traitors among them, and but one civil traitor, the Sheikh Shubleh Arriam, who took bribes of Ibrahim Pasha, and betrayed his brethren in the revolt of 1838. He might perhaps be induced to betray the secrets of the ackals.

A few fragments from the Druse books, carefully translated by Perrier, may not be uninteresting to the reader.

"The god of the Druses desires not that his ackal children should weary themselves in his worship: he is alone glorious and luminous in himself, and he does not exact the toil and fatigue of his children.

"This god, the ruler of the universe, is Alli-el-Allah (the supreme god); he was called also . . . .

"But Alli-el-Allah vanquished the creator of the world, who is now only Adam the rebel.

"Now this supreme god is likewise Melek (the sovereign) Hakem-Bi-Amr-Allah, grand prince who was born in Egypt, etc. etc. . . . .

"Here is the transfusion, the transmigration of the god Bi-Amr-Allah; here is the god Hamzi. Hamzi-Ben-Ahmed-el-Farsi (the Persian) was the vizier of the Caliph Hakem. During his reign, in Cairo, Melek-Bi-Amr-Allah had a subterranean passage made to the lake called El Gizeh. He then left his palace secretly, mounted on an ass, and appeared on a sudden

issuing from the water with his ass. He announced to men that he thus transported himself to different places, and that he was one day to appear in China; accordingly all owned him as a god.

"Now his vizier was Hamzi the Persian, the son of Ahmed. During the night the vizier strangled the god, and in the morning laid his garments on the waters of the lake El Gizeh. All the disciples of Hakem immediately hastened to the spot; but Hamzi said to them, your god is gone; await his return in peace and hope, for he will reappear at the great day."

(There is nothing very surprising in the roguery and wickedness here revealed, but the simple straightforward manner in which the story is told in a book intended for the edification of those who believe in the two impostors,—this is indeed astounding.)

"*Hakem and Hamzi built the great pyramids of Egypt!* Within those buildings there are secret places which they made the depository of the laws and of the wisdom of all times.

"All the prophets who have appeared on earth, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, &c., have all had but one same spirit, transmigrated from one body to the other."

Each Druse family religiously preserves and transmits from father to son what is called the *purse of the faith*. This is a small sum of money carefully sealed up, which is to serve as a token of recognition on the transmigration of the soul of the head of the family into another body. Should a Druse return to life after several successive transmigrations, he could prove his identity, and make himself known as a true believer, by means of the purse of the faith. When families divide, the son selected by the father (usually the eldest son) succeeds to the sacred purse, which he is forbidden to open even in his most urgent need. The purse must always be transmitted in a direct line to the individual who is regarded as the head of the family. During the revolt of Haouran, there were found some of these purses that had been thus sealed up in parchment for hundreds of years without ever having been opened.

The other children of the deceased receive each a small black stone of jet, or agate, in token of hope, union, and recognition. The stone is rudely carved into the form of some animal; a circumstance which has probably occasioned the Syrians to assert that the Druses adore a small stone calf. This is scarcely true; they are not idolaters, but they do entertain a mysterious veneration for the purse of the faith, or for the *hors*, the black stone. The Syrians in general are unwilling to enter the house of a Druse, without first shouting or making a noise to announce their presence, for they are fully persuaded that if they came suddenly upon him, and their eyes lighted by chance on that object of his veneration, which is ever to be sedulously hidden from all the profane, the Druse would be bound by his religion to slay the profaner who had *blackened his face* and *surprised his hidden religion*.

The Druses have signs for mutual recognition, which have much analogy with the forms of free-masonry. The initiated everywhere know each other; when two Druses meet and discover by certain signs that they are both *ackals*, they proceed to interrogate each other. One of them inquires, "Dost thou know in thy country a plant of peculiar excellence above all

others?" "Yes," is the reply; "it is the aliledj." Upon a second inquiry as to the place where grows this marvellous plant, the respondent answers again, "It grows only in the hearts of the faithful Druses who believe in the unity of the God Itakim Bi Amri." The proof is not yet complete; they have now recognised each other as among the faithful and initiated, and next grasping each other's hands, one giving the left, the other the right, they whisper the names of the five prophets or Itedoubs, and two or three words unintelligible to all but those who have reached high degrees among the ackals. The inquiry is now complete, and they salute each other, laying their hands on their breasts.

This mysterious plant, which they call *aliledj* and the other Arabs *cuscuth*, is a small creeper with blue flowers (*cuscuta repens*, or *cuscuta minor*). The plant seems to have been always held in veneration in Syria. Pliny describes it under the name of the *cassyta* or *cadytas* of Syria. For the Druses it is a symbol of faith and union, and a pledge of hope and happiness. A small bunch of it always surmounts their banners; a branch hangs within the doors of their khaluehs, and some seeds and dried flowers of the plant are worn in a small egg-shaped silver box, which hangs from the neck of their acklat women.*

Among no other race, perhaps, is there to be found so strong a faith in amulets (*itedjabs*) as among the Druses; they possess a great number of them, and such implicit confidence do they repose in the virtue of these talismans, that when armed with an *itedjab*, in the most desperate engagements, their natural courage is often exalted to an incredible degree of temerity. The wealthiest among them wear signet rings called *Katem Suleymani*, supposed to have been enchanted by virtue of the name of Solomon. They are commonly of silver, with a black swivel stone, on one surface of which is inscribed the name of the owner, and, on the other, stars, constellations, and cabalistic figures.†

CHAPTER XIII.

The Palace of Bteddin.

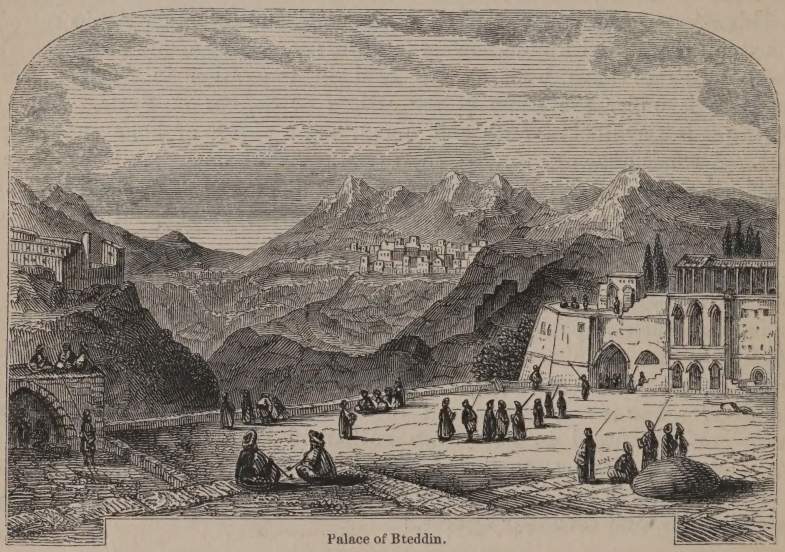
Close to Deir-el-Kammar stands the celebrated palace of Bteddin, built by the Emir Beshir, whose sway extended, previously to the late war, over all the tribes of Lebanon. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the singularity of its fantastic features of position and construction; although, indeed,

* "When I first arrived at the Druse village of Aaere (in the Haouran) there was a large company in the Medhafe, and the Sheikh had no opportunity of speaking to me in private; he therefore called for his inkstand, and wrote upon a piece of paper the following questions, which I answered as well as I could, and returned him the paper:—'Where do the five Wadys flow to in your country?—Do you know the grain of the plant Leiledj, and where is it sown?—What is the name of the Sultan of China?—Are the towns of Hadjar and Nedjran, in the Yemen, known to you?—Is Hadjar in ruins, and who will rebuild it?—Is the Moehdy (the Saviour) yet come, or is he now upon the earth?'"—*Burckhardt.*

† For further details on the religion of the Druses, see Perrier, La Syrie sous Mehemet Ali; and Sylvestre de Sacy, Religion des Druses, 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1838.

its picturesque beauty is somewhat diminished by the rounded forms of the hills which rise below and above it. Lamartine's description of it is very animated. He approached it from the south west, on his way from Seyde northwards. It lies east of a line joining Beyroot and Seyde, and at nearly equal distances from both. He says :—

Turning the angle of a hill we suddenly descried the fantastic palace of the Grand Prince; and with an involuntary burst of surprise we stood still to contemplate the novel, picturesque, and highly Oriental scene before us.



Palace of Bteddin.

At the distance of a few paces from our position, a broad sheet of water rushed in foam from the floodgates of a milldam, and fell from a height of fifty or sixty feet upon rocks that shivered it into glistening shreds: the sound of the cascade, and the coolness it diffused through the air, were most grateful to the sense, and happily disposed us to enjoy the spectacle beyond. Above the cascade, which was lost in depths impenetrable to our eyes, lay the opening of a deep funnel-shaped valley, of the freshest and liveliest verdure, enclosed between mountains adorned to their summit with mulberries, vines, and fig-trees, with here and there some pretty hanging villages. At one point only, a narrow opening afforded a glimpse, over the heads of lower hills, to where the deep blue sea faded away at the horizon into the faint violet of the sky. The mouth of the valley was closed by the bold inland promontory on which the palace was seated. The hill towered up like a huge fortress, its rocky flanks clothed with ivy and festooned with long wavy tufts of trailing verdure. The summit was level with the precipitous ledge on which we stood, and separated from it only by a narrow resounding chasm: the platform was crowned with picturesque buildings of great

extent, and of various shapes and elevations, with flat roofs, forming long wide terraces, clusters of small cupolas, square towers spreading out at top into overhanging battlements and oriel windows, and galleries piled on galleries, presenting long ranges of slender columns and arcades. The broad courts descended like immense flights of stairs from the highest platform to the outer wall of the fortifications. At the further extremity of the largest court stood the irregular façade of the hareem, adorned with light colonades: the shafts were disposed without any regard to symmetry, yet the effect was highly picturesque. They rose to the full height of the building, and supported the light painted roof of a portico, beneath which a marble staircase, decorated with arabesque balustrades, led up to the door of the hareem. The staircase and the gorgeous portal were thronged with black slaves, magnificently dressed, and bristling with splendid arms. The vast courtyards of the palace were crowded with domestics, retainers, priests, and soldiers in all the various and picturesque costumes of the five populations of Lebanon, Druse, Armenian, Greek, Maronite, and Metuali. Five or six hundred horses saddled, bridled, and covered with brilliant housings of every colour, were tied by the feet or head to cords stretched across the court; groups of camels were standing or lying down, or kneeling to be loaded or unloaded; and on the highest terrace of the inner court some young pages pursued each other on horseback, and flung the jereed, or bent low on the saddle to avoid the blow; then wheeling round they galloped at full speed after their disarmed antagonist, and went through all the rapid evolutions of their warlike game with admirable grace and address.

After having contemplated for some moments this oriental scene, so full of novelty for us, we proceeded to the huge massive gate of the first court of the palace, guarded by Arabs armed with muskets and long slight lances. There, we sent the prince the letters which we had for him. A few moments afterwards we were conducted to the apartments which the hospitality of the emir offered us, and the slaves led our suite and horses to another quarter of the palace. Our apartments consisted of a pretty court, decorated with Arabic pilasters, and with a spouting fountain in the centre falling into a large marble basin; round this court were three rooms and a divan, that is to say, a chamber larger than the others, formed by an arcade, which opened on the inner court, and which had neither door nor shutters to close it. It is a place of transition between the house and the street, serving as a garden to the lazy Mussulmans, its motionless shade supplying for them that of the trees, which they have neither the industry to plant, nor energy to go and seek where Nature herself causes them to grow. Our rooms, even in this magnificent palace, would have appeared ruinous to the poorest hut of our peasants; the windows had no glass, an unknown luxury in the east, notwithstanding the rigour of winter in these mountains; no beds, tables, or chairs; nothing but the naked walls, mouldering and riddled with rat and lizard holes; and as a floor, the beaten clay, uneven, and mixed with chopped straw. Slaves brought mats of rush, which they stretched upon this floor, and Damascus carpets, with which they covered the mats; they afterwards brought a small table of Bethlehem manufacture, made of wood, encrusted with mother-of-pearl. These tables are not half a foot either in diameter or in height; they

resemble the trunk of a broken column, and are not capable of holding more than the tray on which the Mohammedans place the five or six dishes which compose their repasts.

Our dinner, which was served on this table, consisted of a pilau, of a dish of sour milk mixed with oil, and certain gourds like our cucumbers, stuffed

Arab Repast.

with hashed mutton and boiled rice. This is, in fact, the most desirable and savoury food which one can eat in the East. No knives, spoons, or forks; they eat with the hands—but the repeated ablutions render this custom less revolting for the Mussulmans.

We had scarcely finished dinner, when the emir sent to tell us that he was waiting for us. We traversed a very large court, ornamented with fountains and a piazza, formed of high slim columns rising from the ground, and supporting the roof of the palace. We were introduced into a very beautiful saloon, the pavement of which was marble, and the ceilings and walls painted with lively colours and elegant arabesques, by artists from Constantinople. Water-spouts murmured in the corners of the apartment; and at the end, behind a colonnade, the inter-columniations of which were barred and glazed, an enormous tiger was seen sleeping with its head upon its paws. One half of the room was filled with secretaries in long robes, each bearing a silver inkstand, pushed like a poniard into their belts; Arabs richly armed and clothed; negroes and mulattoes waiting the orders of their master, and some Egyptian officers, clad in European vests, and having on their heads the Greek bonnet of red cloth, with a long blue tuft hanging on the shoulders. The other part of the saloon was raised about a foot, and a large sofa, or divan, of scarlet velvet, ran round it. The emir was squatted at a corner of this divan. He was a fine-looking old man, with a

lively and penetrating eye, a fresh and ruddy complexion, and a flowing gray beard. A white robe, bound by a cashmere shawl as a belt, entirely covered him, and the glittering handle of a long and broad poniard issued from the folds of his robe as high as his breast, and bore a cluster of diamonds of the size of an orange. We saluted him in the manner of the country, first carrying our hands to our foreheads, and then to our hearts. He gracefully returned our salutation with a smile, and made us a sign to come near and seat ourselves beside him on the divan. An interpreter was on his knees between him and us. Coffee and long pipes were brought, which were several times renewed, and the conversation continued for nearly an hour.

Although we were received with much state, yet the nature of our visit was not such as to call forth the fullest display of Eastern etiquette. In order to give the reader some idea of this, it may not be amiss to cite Perrier's account of the ceremonies observed when Soliman Pasha paid a formal visit with his staff to the Emir Beshir.

"The pasha's brilliant cavalcade was seen a long way off from the residence of the emir, winding along the sinuous and rocky paths of Lebanon, paths that in Europe would be frequented by none but goatherds. The pasha generally preceded his suite, from whom he was easily distinguishable by the glittering of the diamonds on the weapons in his girdle. As soon as he was descried, his approach was made known to the emir: when the visit was official, or one of ceremony, the old prince advanced to meet the pasha, with one of his sons, as far as the steps of the first court; but he halted at the top of the steps, never descending them to meet any one but Ibrahim alone. The emir Emin waited on the last step till Soliman set his foot upon the ground, and just then Emin stretched out his hand, with a gesture as though he would hold the pasha's stirrup; a singular mark of honour, for the actual holding of the stirrup was a service to be rendered by an emir to none but Ibrahim himself. Soliman went up the steps to the old prince, and they both interchanged salutations, repeatedly laying their hands on their hearts.

"The two high personages, followed by their officers, moved then towards the divan, taking scrupulous care to walk abreast, neither outstepping the other. They took their places at the same moment at the opposite angles of the leewan, on cushions precisely alike in height and in every other respect. Emir Emin seated himself next the Egyptian general on one of the side deewans, which was lower than the *sadr* or top deewan. All the officers of both suites then sat down in the order of their rank, noiselessly and without confusion, for in the East every man knows his own place at once. The emir and the pasha repeated their mutual salutations; the former then turned to the suite of the latter, and saluted each officer, one after the other, beginning with the one nearest him. The pasha did the same towards all the emir's officers. Every man responded by bowing and laying his hand on his mouth and his forehead.

"Two black slaves then entered with two pipes exactly alike, and presented them identically at the same instant to the pasha and the emir, who both bowed as they took them, as if each would render to the other the

homage due to the host or the superior. Coffee was next brought in *without being called for*, and handed to both personages in cups with jewelled zarfs, and with the same punctilio as had been observed with regard to the pipes. They emptied their cups simultaneously, so as to make their reverences at the same moment on returning the cups to the negroes, not anticipating one another, nor either suffering himself to be anticipated; for, in the latter case, he who was thus backward would have incurred the imputation of insidiously securing to himself a mark of superiority he affected to decline. Coffee was then handed to the officers of both suites, beginning with those next the two chiefs: and here arose a whimsical difficulty, for which the usages of the West afford no parallel. As the two leaders reciprocally declined all tokens of precedency, their followers were obliged, when they returned their empty cups, to salute with their heads hung down, without looking at any one in particular, but addressing themselves to an imaginary third personage on the deewan midway between the emir and the pasha. When coffee had been despatched, the strictness of etiquette was relaxed, and there was no longer the same constraint as before. The pasha and the emir entered into friendly conversation on politics, or on European news. As the old prince had long practised a very abstemious regimen, he never ate with any one; but care was taken to have a table set before Soliman Pasha, arranged in the European style, not forgetting plenty of wine, both European and of the vintage of Lebanon. Confections and excellent pastry, sent by the Circassian princess in compliment to the pasha, were brought in from the interior of the hareem and set down in the middle of the dinner. The princess herself, accompanied by some of her women, used to be present, in some sort, at these entertainments, being posted behind a small carefully latticed dormer window that looked upon the saloon."

I was delighted with the sagacity, the information, and the noble and dignified manners of this old prince: I rose, after a long conversation, and an attendant now proceeded to show us over the palace. Our cicerone was very proud of some rooms, which had been for a long time in progress under the superintendence of some Damascus artists. They were prettily decorated, reminding one a little of the Alhambra, but not, I think, improved by some fresco paintings representing subjects of the chase, which were here considered the triumph of art. A double-barrelled gun was pointed out to me in particular as a *chef d'œuvre*, and they were really not ill executed by some Landseer of Damascus. One of the oddest ornaments was the face of a large clock painted on the ceiling, with the name of a London maker on it. We were conducted afterwards to the baths, the kitchen, and bakery. The baths consisted of five or six gorgeous rooms, paved with marble, the arched roofs and walls being painted in water colours, with great taste and elegance. Jets of hot, tepid, and cold water, sprang from the pavement, and spread their varied temperatures through the rooms. The kitchen, with sixteen cooks at work, much resembled the large vaulted monastic kitchens to be seen in our colleges, and, in the bakery, we found many men and boys baking flat barley loaves for the consumption of some two thousand individuals.

We noticed some of those simple handmills of Scripture, deemed, in the time of Moses, so essential to the domestic economy of his people, that he exempted them, as he also did the widow's raiment, from the fangs of the pawnbroker. Deut. xxiv. 6—"No man shall take the upper or the nether millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life to pledge."—Matt. xxiv. 41—"Two women shall be grinding at a mill, the one shall be taken, the other left." Two are generally employed in the process of grinding; they sit opposite each other, with the mill between them, and work the stone backwards and forwards, by means of a stick projecting obliquely from the upper surface. Judges x. 53—"And a certain woman cast a piece of millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull." Some commentators wish to render this the upper stone of a handmill. If the Hebrew text allows this it will be the more satisfactory version; for a better missile could not be devised than the entire stone. Such a stone, also, would not only serve as a sufficient weight to drown a swimmer, but might easily be attached to his neck for that purpose. These minute illustrations of Scripture, arising out of the remains of ancient customs still extant in the East, are not perhaps essential to its study: they are however of much interest to the traveller and the student. Towards the internal evidences of the sacred volume's truth, they perform the office of the light finishing touches of an artist to his picture, and are, as far as they go, correctives to scepticism. Sometimes, indeed, a contrary tendency has been imputed to them. "I have heard," says Lord Francis Egerton, of an instance, in which a traveller was commenting on the passage of Scripture, where the healed paralytic takes up his bed, and explaining that the bed was, probably, nothing more than the carpet or light mattress still in use in Eastern countries. The explanation was unfortunately addressed to a worthy person whose ideas of a bed were inseparably connected with the four-post appliance and its appendages used in England, and who considered that the force of the miracle lay not in the cure of the invalid, but in the exertion of his recovered strength. The traveller was considered as an infidel, or at least a rationalist, and was answered triumphantly, 'We believe our Bible.' The designers and engravers of Holland have been very conspicuous promoters of error in this particular. In a Dutch illustrated Bible, in the passage to which I have already adverted, the woman is represented as heaving a millstone of some ten feet diameter on the head of Abimelech. In another engraving, which represents the angel of the Revelations, whose

Handmill.

legs were like pillars of fire, these limbs are two fluted columns with Corinthian capitals."

We went next to visit the courts and stables, where the emir's splendid Arabians were kept. It is only in the stables of Damascus, or in such as those of the Emir Beshir, that a just idea can be had of the Arabian horse. This superb and graceful animal loses his beauty, his gentleness, and his picturesque form, when he is transplanted from his native country and familiar habits into our cold climates, and the darkness and solitude of our stables. He should be seen at the door of the tent with the Arabs of the desert, his head between his legs, shaking his long black mane like a moving umbrella, and lashing his sides, polished like brass or silver, with his spreading tail, the end of which is always dyed purple with henna; he should be seen with his sparkling trappings turned up with gold, and embroidered with pearls; his head covered with a net of red or blue silk woven with gold or silver tissue, and the tinkling points of which fall from his forehead over his nostrils, and display or conceal by turns, at every undulation of his neck, the large, intelligent, fiery, the soft yet proud orb of his eye. Above all he should be seen when in a body of two or three hundred, as we saw him; some stretched on the dust of the court; others shackled with iron rings, and fastened to long cords which reached across the courts; others running loose upon the sand, and clearing, at a bound, the rows of camels which lay in their way; some that were held in the hand by young black slaves, in scarlet vests, rested their heads in a caressing manner upon the shoulders of the boys; there were some frisking together, free and tetherless as colts in a meadow, rearing against each other, or rubbing their foreheads together, or licking each other's shining and silvery skins. They all looked at us with an unquiet and inquisitive attention, owing to our European costumes, and our strange tongue; but their shyness soon wore off, and they came gracefully forward and yielded their necks to be patted and caressed. The varied expression and transparency of physiognomy possessed by these horses, is not to be believed by those who have not witnessed it. All their thoughts are depicted in their eyes, and in the convulsive movement of their jaws, lips, and nostrils, with as much certainty, force of character, and varied play of features, as the emotions of the mind on the face of a child. When we drew near them, for the first time, they pouted, and gave signs of repugnance and of curiosity perfectly similar to those which a nervous man would make at the appearance of an unexpected and unpleasant object. Our language especially struck and astonished them; and the motion of their ears held erect, thrown back, or pointed forwards, testified their surprise and alarm. I admired above the rest several priceless mares, reserved for the emir exclusively. I made an offer to the equerry through the interpreter as far as 10,000 piastres for one of the most beautiful; but no temptation will induce an Arab to part with a mare of pure blood, and this time I could purchase nothing.

One who knew the Emir Beshir well* says that most travellers who have spoken of the old man, have depicted him with more poetry than truth.

* Perrier.

Something indeed there was very imposing in his grave countenance, his long silvery beard, and tall stately figure, especially for those who saw him for the first time. Like most Orientals of high station, the emir was admirably skilled in dissembling his feelings, and in giving his countenance at times an appearance of gentleness and serenity by no means habitual with him. The amiable-looking ruffian, Ali Pasha of Yanina, will at once occur to the reader's mind :—

> A man of war and woes ;
> Yet on his lineaments ye cannot trace,
> While gentleness her milder radiance throws
> Along that aged venerable face,
> The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

The emir's white beard, that reached almost to his girdle, and his manly person, graceful even in extreme age, gave him such a patriarchal air as seldom failed to charm the passing visitor: but for those who saw him more frequently the charm vanished, and there remained in his whole physiognomy an expression of cold-blooded atrocity too obvious to be mistaken. His thick, bushy, grey eyebrows met at the root of the nose, and formed a single continuous arch ; the hairs composing them were long and hard, and bent downwards over his eyes, partially concealing the pupils. Through that thick screen you saw the emir's eyes, sometimes flashing like the tiger's, sometimes dull and motionless as those of a statue. This type of countenance has been common to many Orientals famous for their cruelty, such as Djezzar Pasha, Tchapan Oglou, and Ali Tebeln Pasha of Yanina.

His life was a long tissue of mingled fraud and violence, full of dramatic incidents and strange vicissitudes. He was not born to the high station he filled, but attained to it by treacherously supplanting his uncle and benefactor, the emir Youssef. His avarice was unbounded, and his self-love and vindictiveness knew neither remorse nor pity. He amassed enormous wealth by the extortions he practised on an impoverished people, and it would be a long list that should contain the names of all the victims he assassinated, or who had their tongues cut off and their eyes burned out by his orders. The latter was the fate of many of his near kindred. And yet his reputation was generally that of a man of much clemency! The truth is, he was above all things politic—in his avarice as well as in his vengeance. If he robbed the peasant, he took care not to ruin him, but left him the means of again becoming profitable to his tyrant ; and he committed no gratuitous cruelties ; he murdered and mutilated only those who were really formidable to him, and won himself honour by sparing the rest. Augustus Cæsar, we know, obtained a reputation for many virtues, and on equally cheap terms.

During the latter years of the emir's residence at Bteddin, his domestic habits were simple and melancholy. He always rose two or three hours before day, and leaving the harem he took his seat on the velvet cushions of a small stone niche near the grand staircase of the palace. Two black slaves always stood before him with folded arms, awaiting his orders, and attending to the long pipe that was never a moment out of his hands all day long. For many an hour, while all the palace slept, there sat the emir, motionless and silent, passing through his fingers the amber beads of his *massbah*, and

perhaps revolving in his mind all the reminiscences of his long life of power, perfidy, and crimes.

Notwithstanding all the foul stains on his character, the emir was not insensible to the charms of domestic happiness: he proved himself a kind and affectionate husband and father. His first wife was the widow of a Turkish bey whom he had shortly before caused to be murdered; and so earnest and solicitous was the affection with which he treated her, that he succeeded in effacing from her recollection the sad auspices under which their union had been contracted. She lived to a very advanced age, and never did he give her the least cause to complain of his conduct towards her. She suffered in her latter days under a painful and loathsome malady, but nothing could diminish his attachment for her; he was himself her nurse, provided for all her wants with his own hands, and testified the liveliest sorrow when she died.

Some time after, wearied of the lonely life he led in his palace, he resolved to contract a new marriage; and he acted in this matter with the policy that marked every action of his life. Not choosing to disturb the balance of family interests in Lebanon, by selecting a wife from any native house, he sent a confidential person to Constantinople, who purchased there a beautiful Circassian slave. He married the girl—her age was but sixteen—after having caused her to be baptised. She proved an excellent wife, and always made the most benevolent use of the great influence she possessed over her husband.

It has been said, that the emirs of Lebanon were by turns Druses, Christians, or Mussulmans, as circumstances and their interests determined; and, to a certain extent, this is true. As religion offered the Shehab family the readiest means of conciliating the several mountain tribes, they used it with such good effect, that each could flatter itself with the belief that the emir inwardly shared its faith, notwithstanding the concessions he was constrained to make to the others. Thus it was that these princes were usually Mussulmans for the followers of Mohammed; Druses, for the Druses; and Catholics, for the Maronites: they had Christian chapels in their palaces, where they had their children baptised; and mosques, in which those children were sometimes circumcised; lastly, after death, their bodies belonged to the Druses, and to this day they are interred in accordance with their usages and the belief in transmigration.

The practice of falconry, it is well known, was introduced into Europe by the crusaders on their return from Syria. It is still a favourite pastime in that country, but the emir Beshir was the only one who kept up the practice in the old feudal and most princely style. It was the old man's only recreation, and he seldom quitted the purlieus of his palace except in the hawking season, the January and February of every year. A thousand peasants or more took post on all the heights in a ring of three miles radius round the emir's position. The old man sat on a deewan, smoking his pipe, surrounded by his relations and officers all standing in his presence, and with a dozen hooded falcons on perches by his side, and one on his fist. When the signal was given, the peasants set up loud shouts, and gradually contracted the circle they formed round the emir, beating the underwood at the same time,

to make the partridges rise. The instant one was perceived, though it might be at an enormous distance, the emir cast off the falcon he held on his fist. With the speed of an arrow it darted after the partridge, rose, hovered an instant, then swooping down, struck its quarry, and fell with it to the ground. The moment the falcon was cast off, fifty horsemen and as many trained dogs dashed forth over the hills and along the valleys, to secure the game. It was requisite to catch the bird speedily, and cut its throat while it was yet warm, in order to satisfy the Mohammedan law, which forbids the eating of any animal from which the blood has not been wholly drained. The brain of the bird was given to the falcon. Every day the sport lasted the emir bagged from 150 to 200 partridges. In order to prevent the destruction of the whole stock of birds in the mountains, he made it a rule not to visit the same hawking ground oftener than one season in every five. Let the reader picture to himself as the theatre where this magnificent spectacle was displayed, all he can conceive of wild and beautiful in mountain scenery; let him imagine the multitude of the actors in the scene, their varied and picturesque costumes, their endless and ever-changing diversities of position, attitude, gesture, and grouping; the many riders, the beauty of their steeds, the thundering tramp of man and horse, the crashing of the rocks hurled from the cliffs, the baying of the dogs, and the shouts and yells bursting from a thousand throats, and tossed to and fro by all the mad echoes of the mountains;—let him try to conjure up in his mind such a picture of intense life and movement, and he may have some faint idea of a scene unlike anything beheld in Europe.

CHAPTER XIV.

Route from Beyroot to Damascus.

It was at day-break, on the 4th of Jan. 1841, that we began our long purposed journey across the mountains to Damascus.* We mustered six horses and their riders, besides our mookres and baggage-mules; for our party which at first consisted of the Baron von Taubenheim, myself, and our factotum, Giovanni, had received an accession in the persons of Prince Aslan, a Georgian, and his two servants.

We rode northwestwards from the town, through the deep sands of Fakr ed Deen's grove. Here and there a small brook, the child of the everlasting snows above, wound through the dry soil, and looked from a distance like a glittering green snake; for all along its moist banks grew a border of plants and weeds, that stood out in sharp relief from the yellow sands. In a short while we had left behind us the pines and the little palm woods, that form a green girdle round the foot of Lebanon; and the noble mountain stood full before our eyes, beautifully coloured by the beams of the rising sun.

After two hours' continual ascent we came to a solitary khan, with an aqueduct, roughly constructed of unhewn stone, along which a pearly rill was

* Hackländer.

conducted into a basin in the court: we passed the khan, and as the road beyond it became somewhat steep, we dismounted and led our horses. The ground was very unfavourable for walking, being a loose, deep sand; the sun, too, shone out hotly, though the month was January, and warmed us more than was desirable. The soil soon changed its appearance, and we came to a few small huts inhabited by people who, by an ingenious economy of the mountain streams, had won from rock and sand some little fields for culture. Their labours, however, had not tended to the improvement of the roads, on which they threw small stones from their inclosures, whilst they used the larger for building low walls around them. Here and there we met a Maronite or a Druse on their way to the town;—they always greeted us kindly, and parted from us with a loud "Allah il Allah!"—God is God!—a very usual salutation in these regions. A little higher up we met negroes escorting a couple of Turkish ladies from Damascus, who were mounted on mules, and closely veiled.

After another hour of very steep ascent we came to a well-known khan—Khan el Hussein—fitted up in a more habitable style than any other in Lebanon, and in which travellers crossing the mountains often take up their quarters for the first night. When we got there our mookres began to unload the beasts, as if it was a matter of course that we should stop where we were; but we protested vehemently against this, and insisted on pursuing our journey, for it was only one, P. M. But, as sometimes happened to us in similar disputes with the natives, our dragoman, Giovanni, sided with the mookres, not being in the humour, apparently, for travelling further that day. He drew the most frightful pictures of what would befal us should night overtake us in the passes of Lebanon, and talked of treacherous chasms full of snow and ice, of robbers, and heaven knows what besides. Nevertheless, the crossing of the Balcan, of which pretty much the same things had been prophesied to us, was too fresh in our memory to let us pay any heed to all this prate. But what was to be done? Again and again we urged our dragoman to ask the men was there no possibility of our making further way that day, and reaching another khan; and as often were we foiled with the answer, "The thing is impossible." The result would have been that we should have been forced to pass the night where we were, had not the noise of the discussion (for we had waxed warm) attracted the attention of a passing Arab, who came up and accosted us. He asked the Baron, in most extraordinary English, if he understood that tongue. Now never, perhaps, was language so broken—nay, that is not the word, racked and smashed rather—as the English of our new friend, but it sounded in our ears like music. The Arab told us that all the opposition to our further progress seemed to him to proceed from our *dertchman* (dragoman), for that the people had repeatedly told him that, if we set out speedily, we might very well reach another khan by nightfall, but that we must make haste, for the road was rather bad. This put an end, of course, to all discussion. The word to march was given to the mookres through the medium of the English Arab; Signor Giovanni, who had richly deserved a sound threshing, and that not by any means for the first time, was peremptorily commanded to hold his peace, and in a few minutes we were again in motion.

I have mentioned this little episode to give an idea how much the traveller in the East is at the mercy of his dragoman's humour. This was not the only instance of the kind that occurred to us; and we had not always the good fortune to fall in with a polyglot friend, who could help us out of our dilemmas. There is nothing to be made of these people by civil treatment and fair words, such as the Baron always gave his servants; and I counsel every traveller to use his cudgel at once upon the least attempt of his Arab servants to dispute his orders, or to humbug him with idle excuses.

Immediately beyond Khan el Hussein the road began to assume another aspect. Hitherto the soil had been chiefly sand, sometimes vegetable mould, and it was only in places that the path was strewed with stones; nor till we had reached nearly to this elevation had we lost sight of the pines, figs, and small shrubs of various kinds. But now the whole region was bare and desolate. The ground was solid rock, presenting but narrow paths continually winding with steep acclivities round the huge crags. The air, too, was grown keener, for cold blasts often rushed down on us from the snow-clad peaks of Jebel Kuniseyeh, which rose before us on the left. We overtook and passed a long file of camels laden with large beams, each animal carrying

two, hung right and left of its packsaddle, and parallel with its body; and after an hour's march, we had surmounted the first summit of the mountain, the lowest of the three chains that constitute Lebanon, and which, separated by wild and almost impassable glens, form three mighty ranges of natural ramparts.

We cast one more look from this elevation on the region we had left behind us, but we saw nothing but the wide waste of the sea; Beyroot lay too close under the foot of Lebanon to be visible to us. Our mookres were in too great haste to allow of our spending much time in looking about us. The road now began to descend; that is to say, we had to look out for a road

of some sort among the crags and chasms that lay before us, with a vast wild glen beneath them. As a matter of course, we all dismounted to lead our horses, or rather to follow the example of the Arabs, and let our horses lead us. The cleverness of these animals in such roads is really amazing. We left them to pick out their way, and followed their guidance. Sometimes they twisted themselves through a chink between two upright blocks, and sometimes, when our further progress seemed suddenly cut off by an almost vertical precipice, they snuffed and spied about, till at last they discovered a practicable path, probably known to them before, down which we followed them, but which was often so narrow that we could hardly set one foot before the other. We now came to a smooth declivity, shelving steeply for several hundred feet; and down we all slided, unable to stop ourselves till we were brought up by the rocks below. In less time than we had expected we arrived safely at the bottom of the valley, through which flowed a clear stream of ice-cold water. An awful silence reigned around us; no trace of man's existence met our view; no verdure of tree or shrub, only here and there a few stunted, withered fir-trees protruded from among the stones.

We pursued our way for some time up the banks of the stream, and came to a half-ruined, abandoned hut, where the road seemed to turn off to the right, and to lead up the other wall of the glen; but how we were to clamber up this seemed to us a mystery, and we were just making up our minds that our guides had led us astray, when all at once we spied a string of mules on the top of the cliff before us, preparing to descend it. We stopped to watch them; and we thought every moment, as we saw them straining over a fresh escarpment of the crag, that now, indeed, they must inevitably topple down and be dashed to pieces at our feet. Frequently they wound along paths that, as seen from below, seemed no wider than their feet, with a vertical wall on one hand, and a precipice several hundred feet deep on the other. We saw them descend by zigzags along the perpendicular face of a cliff, then march along a stone causeway, looking like flies creeping along the back of a knife, then vanish behind rocky peaks, resembling monstrous sugar-loaves; and when we saw them again, they were hanging on to the face of a rapid declivity where we could discern no sign of a path, and where the whole caravan had often an appearance that reminded us of grass waving over the verge of a precipice.

They were with us in no long time, considering the height of the mountain; and after exchanging a few words with the muleteers, we began to ascend the road they had just come down. Though on a nearer view it was not altogether so dangerous as it had at first appeared, still it was a sufficiently neck-breaking piece of work, and there were some spots which, on any other occasion, I should have pronounced decidedly impracticable for men, to say nothing of horses. Thus, for instance, high up the ascent, our path was a regular staircase, each step being a block from two to three feet deep, and about as wide, with a naked wall on one side and a precipice on the other. Moreover, a small rill trickled over this staircase, making it slippery with moss and herbage. I should not advise any one liable to giddiness to cast a look from that height into the abysses all round him. The whole scene was one of colossal savage grandeur.

When we had mounted higher, I perceived that the valley we had left behind us connected the first with the second mountain range only for a short extent. It fell off right and left, first with a scarcely perceptible inclination, then suddenly with a mighty plunge towards the sea (which, however, was no longer visible to us), and it opened a view to us into gigantic ravines, in which a keen eye might study the natural history of Lebanon. Deep below us, the bed of these ravines seemed covered with green billows, which became more and more transparent as they beat higher up against the craggy sides. These green floods were the vines and olives of the Maronite villages, scattered here and there through the mountains, luxuriant groves, produced by the soil of the lower regions. They gradually diminish as they ascend into the bleaker regions, and give place at last to scattered patches of pines, firs, and cedars. Adjoining them are yellow strips of ground that one might suppose to be sand ; but they are arable fields that, even at a considerable elevation, are thickly covered with corn. Above them lies sand, which, in its turn, gives place to bare rocks that gradually increase in size from the small stones that strew the paths up to the enormous blocks buttressing the snow-capped summit of the mountain.

Our beasts often paused to take breath, and afforded us time to contemplate the indescribable beauties of the mountains. Assuredly it is poetry—real, palpable, visible poetry—thus to stand on a dizzy slippery peak a few feet wide, and send one's busy thoughts plunging deep into the chasms that yawn around on all hands—to clamber up paths where a single false step would be instant destruction !

When we left Beyroot it had been rather warm in the lowlands, though the sky was overcast, and we had thrown off our cloaks and furs at the beginning of our march ; but we soon found it expedient to resume them. We were now climbing the middle and highest range of Lebanon, and the cold began to make itself felt very sensibly. Below, the air had been calm ; but at this elevation we had winds rushing upon us here and there from the ravines with no little force. All vegetation completely ceased here ; and instead of the little shrubs and mosses that had filled the rents of the rocks lower down, a few thin white locks of snow reached down to our feet from the thickly-covered crown of the mountain. For us Europeans there was a peculiar sort of pleasure in once more looking upon snow : it was like meeting an old familiar friend from our native land. I could not refrain from dismounting, and gathering a snow-ball, which I cast down the declivity with a cordial greeting to my distant home. The horses, on the contrary, did not seem half to like the snow ; they were very shy of approaching it ; and when it was necessary for them to tread upon it, they did so with the greatest circumspection, lifting their legs high, as if they were afraid of sinking through it at every step.*

We were much interested with another phenomenon that met us here, but with which neither our mookres nor our horses seemed by any means pleased.

* An ingenious device is often practised by the muleteers who have occasion to make journeys across the mountain in winter. To prevent the sharp hoofs of the mules from sinking deep into the snow, they are accustomed, in the difficult places, to spread carpets before them as they pass.—BURCKHARDT.

We rode gradually into the heart of the cloud that hung over the mountain-top. At first we felt a cold blast pouring down on us from all sides, and covering us with a slight mist, which grew thicker at every step: the breath of man and beast congealed into gray streams of fog, as in frosty weather, and hung in light rime on their beards and hair. Our chief mookre put himself at the head of the caravan, and made earnest signs to us to follow him immediately, in single file, and in as close order as we could; for the path to the top of the second range, which we had now to surmount, would not admit of our riding abreast, and there was danger of our losing our way in the thick fog: there was, indeed, good reason for these precautions, for very soon we could scarcely see three paces before us. Every object now assumed gigantic magnitude: the Baron rode immediately before me, and he and his horse loomed out with colossal proportions; his cloak fluttered like a rent cloud swept by the blast; and had I casually encountered such a rider alone, I should have taken him for the mighty spirit of the mountain, rushing on the wings of the storm over his wild domain.

Ere long we had left the clouds behind us, out of which, as I looked back, I saw the mookres and their beasts come forth one by one, like divers emerging from a great sheet of water. We were now above the region of the clouds, and we looked once more upon the gladdening face of the clear blue heavens.

The high plateau over which we now rode resembled an island in the sea; for all round it were masses of clouds like surging billows, that rose and fell, and changed their forms with every gust of wind, rendering the illusion complete. Right and left, out of this sea of clouds, rose two of the highest pinnacles of Lebanon, looking like icebergs, as their mantles of snow gleamed in the sunshine. Our road was now a little easier, but did not continue long so: it soon contracted again, and wound with a gentle acclivity towards a higher peak on the right, where it became more dangerous than ever. Here we had an almost perpendicular wall on the right and on the left, one of those deep ravines I have spoken of above. The path itself was at most two feet wide, covered with snow, and not even flat from side to side, but rather sloping towards the precipice. Our beasts, of course, could only walk one after the other; and, conscious of the danger, they squeezed up as closely as they could to the rock, without much tenderness for their riders' skins. The abyss on the left exhibited a singular and magnificent spectacle. The clouds had sunk somewhat, and allowed us to see freely to the depth, perhaps, of a hundred feet: beyond that depth nothing was visible but the gray streaming mists, looking exactly like the smoke of a huge fire burning beneath us. Somewhat higher up we saw them tinged a rosy hue by the sun, and we could have fancied ourselves in a colossal theatre, where, at the conclusion of some romantic spectacle, the clouds on which the genii sat were slowly vanishing away—with them vanished the poetry that had beautified the scene, and it was once more a bleak and uninviting region.

There is not, perhaps, another mountain in the world that arrays itself, at rise or set of sun, in more glorious, ever-changing hues than Lebanon; nor can any other show such an endless variety of strangely-formed valleys and glens. Sometimes they are a savage chaos of rock piled on rock, dreary and appalling, as though the curse of heaven lay on them for ever; sometimes the eye looks down on scenes the very opposite in character to these.

One such spot I particularly remember, on which I gazed in dreamy speculation, till a bend of the road hid it from my sight. It was a lovely little dell, lapped between naked red rocks, with fresh green meadows dotted over with low tufts of foliage, and bounded on the further side by a green hill, which fortunately concealed the rude crags beyond it, and allowed the fancy to clothe the unseen distance with still greater, though unreal, beauties. Beyond that hill, thought I, there must surely be a little village, and, but for the gathering mists of evening, I should see the white point of its church-spire tapering towards the sky ;—but I did hear the sound of its bells : I heard plainly, and, though my eye told me the sound proceeded from the bells of our baggage-mules, I did not believe the tale, but looked keenly towards the pretty dell, expecting full surely to catch sight of the houses with their windows glinting back the golden fires of evening. In just such a valley as this I had passed many a happy day : that, too, was but an illusion; and ere long, fate, as importunate as these crags of Lebanon, thrust itself between me and that blissful spot, and I bade it, as now this valley, an eternal farewell.

We were now safely arrived beyond the middle and highest ridge of Lebanon; and once more descending into a valley, not so wild as that from which we had climbed on the other side, we had before us the third and last range of the mountains, where we were to quarter for the night. The sun had sunk behind the hills, and dark mists were boiling up from the valleys and ravines. Our animals seemed very tired, for our day's march had been a hard one, yet the mookres pressed forward with all the speed they could; they were impatient to reach the khan, for we had an ugly piece of ground to cross before we arrived there. This was the more unpleasant as the night, which here comes on with scarcely any previous twilight, had fully overtaken us before we had reached the last height we had to cross ; and it was so dark that I, for one, could not distinguish the nearest object before me. More clouds, too, had for some time been gathering in the sky, and it began to snow—an annoyance which was augmented by the keen wind that swept against us from the valley.

We followed the course of a stream with no very agreeable feelings. Unfavourable as the darkness was in one respect, it had this good effect, that it prevented us from perceiving the dangers that lay around us, and we had nothing for it, but every man to follow his leader in God's name. When I heard the sound of sliding hoofs before me, I knew what would be my own case soon, and I made up my mind for some awkward bumping. Sometimes our caravan was like a great tangled skein of thread, and lucky it was that our poor beasts were too tired to fall to kicking; sometimes we got straggling far asunder, till we were brought together again by the shouts of the mookres. These men, like the Turkish post Tartars, have a peculiar yell, which no throats but their own can accomplish, and by which they signal the way in the darkness.

After groping along for an hour, we saw something before us like a great mass of rock, only regularly formed, and differing from the rest we had seen inasmuch as it was hailed with loud cheers by our mookres. It was our khan; and glad enough we were to find at last a shelter from the snow-storm, let its interior be what it might.

This khan, of which none of our people knew the name, was a tolerably spacious building of rough uncemented stones, the chinks between which

Khan in Lebanon.

were filled up with earth and moss. The walls must have been about twenty feet high; the flat roof was made of two close ranges of palm trees crossing each other at right angles, and stuffed with the same materials as the walls: a layer of large stones was placed over all, to keep this simple roof from being blown asunder by the storms. The interior of the building was divided into three parts, the largest of which served as a stable, the second as a servants' room, and we ourselves took up our quarters in the third. There was not much to choose between them in point of internal decoration; only the stable seemed the most comfortable of the three, from the warmth of the animals and from the covering of dry leaves and a little straw on the floor. There was also a shed on the outside, formed by a projection of the roof supported by palm trees, where horses could be unloaded in such weather as we now had, without exposing the luggage to wet.

Our mookres, who were a few paces in advance of us, rode at once into the shed, and began to unpack: we were accustomed to hear plenty of shouting on such occasions; but now such a tremendous uproar began the moment they entered the shed, men vociferating and horses neighing, that we hurried up as fast as we could to know what it was all about. A Turkish colonel, it appeared, with his suite returning from Damascus, had taken possession of the khan and its appurtenances, and as there was not room for all their horses in the stable, they had tied up some of them in the shed; these not being of so peaceable a temper as those of our mookres, began to kick as soon as the latter came amongst them; whereupon the Turks, supposing themselves surprised by heaven knows what enemies, rushed out with weapons and firebrands in their hands to defend themselves,

or, perhaps, only to—run away. They started back when they saw us, but became tranquillised when the Baron informed them that we were travellers like themselves, and that we were in search of quarters for the night. One of them, a fine stately fellow, laid his hand on his fez and bade us welcome with the usual inshallah. The Turks tied up their horses at some distance from ours, and whilst the mookres were busy unpacking, we entered the guest chamber. It looked uninviting and comfortless enough. There was no head-waiter with a dozen understrappers at his heels, with napkins on their arms and wax lights in their hands, to show us to our handsomely furnished apartment. Here there was only one sitting and sleeping-room for all comers, and that so low that the Baron could hardly stand upright in it. The floor was trodden clay, with a hole sunk in the middle, in which some burning charcoal served the threefold purpose of boiling our coffee, warming the room, and giving us light.

The colonel, for such the diamond nishah on his breast showed him to be, was so obliging as to send his suite, from the yisbashi (captain) downwards, into the other apartment to make room for us, and we soon made ourselves as comfortable as possible. We supped, smoked a few pipes, and gratified our Turkish friends with sundry vocal performances *à l'européenne;* after this we felt much in want of sleep, and made preparation for bed. A stone served each man for a pillow; the baron wrapped himself up in his Hungarian *bunta*, of which he generously gave me a portion; the Turks laid aside their pipes, and all was profound stillness, only broken now and then by the howling of the storm without, or the snoring of some of the sleepers. Our beds, however, were far from comfortable; we were obliged to keep our legs bent up to our bodies to avoid singeing them among the embers in the middle of the room. But tired as we were we soon fell asleep, though not for any great length of time. I was awakened in a few hours by a sound like the fall of heavy drops of rain, such as precede the outbursts of a summer storm. Not wishing to disturb the sleepers I staid quiet, and only felt with my hand my fur coverlet and the ground about: it was as I suspected; everything I touched was wet. The snow that had fallen all day had been melted by the heat of our fire, and had filtered through the ill-made roof, drenching us with muddy water. The baron was soon on his legs; and the poor prince, who unfortunately happened to be lying in a corner, assured us with his favourite adjuration, *parole d'honneur*, that he was swimming in a complete sauce.

After long debating what was to be done, we adopted the suggestion of the Turkish colonel; we had a fire lighted, coffee prepared, and with some ten pipes sending up their smoke together we awaited the morning.

By daybreak our mookres were ready for the road. Our caravan had received an increase; for four Bedouins, who were bound like us for Damascus, offered for a small backsheesh to afford us their company and the aid of their arms if necessary. We took leave of the Turkish colonel, who continued his route to Beyroot, and we journeyed for a while along the valley over which our khan was situated, on a tolerably good road—that is, for Syria, for its descent was gradual, and not almost perpendicular. The noble valley of the Bekaa, that parts Lebanon from Antilebanon, was

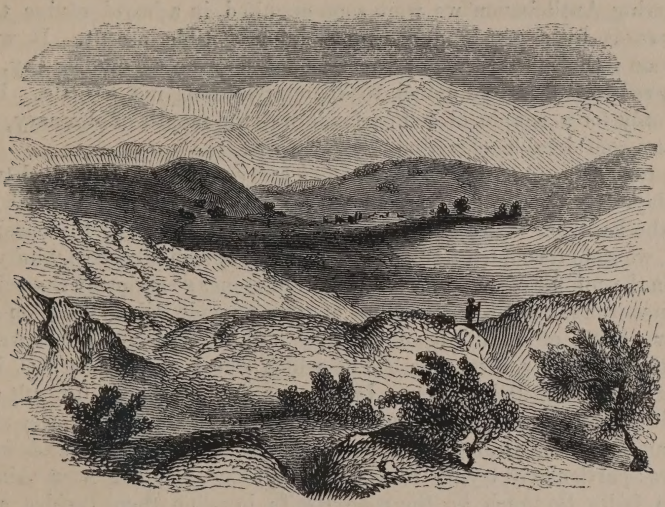
close before us, but we did not see it: a thick white mist had settled down between the two mountains, and nothing was visible above it but the summits of Antilebanon. The white clouds resembled a vast lake, and so complete was the illusion, that at the first glance we asked what water that could be. On our right we saw a ruined castle, which tradition assigns to the Assassins; so at least our dragoman told us, making with his hand as he spoke the gesture of cutting off a head. After an hour's tedious descent we reached the sea of mist, and passed through a miserable village, at the entrance of which we fell in with some hundred deserters from the Egyptian infantry, escaping from Damascus to the mountains, for they were all Syrians.

Mounted Bedouins.

Our Bedouins brandished their lances, and we all stood to our arms, at the sight of these men: but there was no need of such precaution, for the whole troop scattered right and left at our approach, and made off between the houses. Giovanni suspected that they would not have let us pass so peaceably, but that they took us for the precursors of a large English force, probably on its march against Damascus. They were all dressed in white cotton, with red tarboushes, and hardly any weapons: a few had rusty guns, or a pair of long pistols; but most of them were armed only with long sticks.

We were soon wading through the mists of the plain, which were so thick that we could see nothing whatever of the rich soil over which we rode, nor could any of us discern his neighbour, though we kept but a few feet asunder. The ground was heath, intersected with numerous streams and watercourses, which we leaped or crossed on tottering stone bridges. So we rode without the least view of the landscape till towards midday, when the sunbeams at last overcame the mists, and rent and dispersed them, chasing them right and left into the ravines of the two majestic mountains that encased the plain, and disclosing a wide prospect over the rich champaign.

A noble and beautiful plain is the Bekaa! but not for its manifold verdure or its luxuriant woods; not for its cheerful dwellings or its lively patchwork



Plain of Bekaa.

of various crops, such as so beautifully colour our valleys: no,—it is almost destitute of tree or shrub; its general hue is a yellowish gray, like that of our moors; but numerous small rills intersect it, and enliven it with sinuous lines of verdure; for wherever water refreshes the thirsty soil of these regions, small plants instantly spring up, and fringe every runnel with the softest green. So it is with this plain, which of itself would be but bleak and monotonous but for the copious waters poured into it from its mighty neighbours, Lebanon and Antilebanon, to which it owes its wondrous charms.

Passing by a small isolated hill, on which stood a small building with a cupola, probably the tomb of some Mohammedan saint, we came immediately upon the lower mountain range that forms the western outworks of Antilebanon. Upon the top of this range stood another dismantled old fortress, like that we had seen the preceding evening on Lebanon; and this too, according to Giovanni's account, had belonged to the Assassins: he had heard tell that it had been a prison, but that was all he knew about it. If we might trust the suggestions of fancy, which so delights in weaving its poetic threads round any old monument, be it a castle or a convent, Giovanni's account was correct; a more beautiful prospect than must have met the eye from the towers of yonder castle can hardly be conceived. Full in front of it were the chains of Lebanon, to be followed by the eye from its loftiest snow peaks perhaps to its remote offshoots in Palestine. The whole plain of the Bekaa was visible as far as Balbec, with its splendid structures, then in their full pomp and glory; and Antilebanon unfolded its most mysterious recesses, its wildest glens and chasms to the eye. In yonder castle we may imagine the disobedient to have been incarcerated; there they were left to

gaze with vain longings on the heavenly regions their feet should never tread again, and to pine, perhaps, amidst tortures of all kinds, for the paradise they had lost for ever.

Entering Antilebanon we were soon engulfed in a broad ravine that led us upwards by a gentle and almost imperceptible ascent. It was now high noon; the sun beat down directly upon us from a cloudless sky, and its beams, reflected from the naked rocks, oppressed us not a little. But this lasted only for a couple of hours, for it was the month of January, and we were at a considerable elevation above the sea.

The road through Antilebanon did not carry us, like that we had travelled yesterday, over formidable heights, but lay for the most part through ravines along the banks of streams. After we had reached the first inconsiderable height, we rode through a small valley encompassed on all sides by lofty mountains, in the middle of which lay a number of stones so curiously shaped that at a distance we took them for the tents of some nomade tribe. We then entered another ravine of fearful beauty. Our path, scarcely two feet wide, ran along the bank of a river, the bed of which was some twenty feet beneath us, but contained little water. It was horribly rough and difficult: sometimes it ceased altogether, and our beasts had to clamber along the shelving bank among loose rolling stones, where they could hardly find foothold. This was particularly trying to our laden mules, and the poor things had many a fall. So much for the road itself: imagine then, besides, a ravine hardly fifty feet wide, with rocky walls on either side rising to a height of four or five hundred feet, their nakedness unbroken by a single leaf, and hardly by a single patch of moss. The reader will believe me when I say that it was in deep and silent thought we passed through this place. The masses of rock crowning the walls of the ravine occasionally assumed the strangest forms. Sometimes they seemed like giants sitting up there, and looking down with laughter and surprise on us pygmies; sometimes they looked like monstrous animals; yonder rose a castle, with battlemented walls and stately towers; and here the regular clefts and cracks in the smooth face of the rock resembled inscriptions. The genius of the mountain no doubt used that wall for a tablet.

We halted a moment at the end of the ravine, where the stream makes a little cascade, to take some refreshment and rest our beasts. We then turned our steps to a mountain before us, the only one on that day's journey that was rather lofty, and at the same time unusually steep. Our mookres, however, comforted us with the assurance that beyond it all the rest of the way to our night-quarters would be down-hill, and that the latter were not very far off. The day was declining, and we pressed forwards with all the speed we could; but being retarded by the slow pace of our baggage-mules, Giovanni suggested that the baron, the prince, and I, should ride on before the caravan, under the guidance of the Bedouins, who were perfectly acquainted with the way, whilst he would follow on more slowly with the baggage. Thereupon one of the Bedouins having assured us with a great deal of pantomimic action that both he and his horse well knew the road to Shiras, (the village we were bound for,) we galloped on with them; at first along a deep glen, by a road consisting, fortunately, more of sand than of

stone, and then along a succession of caldron-shaped valleys, that looked like dried fish-ponds; then came a pretty sharp declivity, and we reached a brook with a stone bridge across it. There was a small khan some hundred paces from the brook, but it was unoccupied. We passed the bridge and entered another ravine gaping between prodigiously lofty crags belonging to the second range of Antilebanon. Though not so formidable as that before described, the ravine had rocks equally steep and strangely formed as the others: still it did not produce the same painful sense of compression, as though the threatening walls would close together and crush us: they stood more freely apart, and here and there afforded glimpses of the landscape beyond them. Coming soon after this to a place where the road divided into two branches, the Bedouins chose the lower one, first holding a long parley among themselves, which I thought was no good sign. Again descending, we came to the bank of a river, the Barrada, as we afterwards learned. Our road was about forty feet above the water, which, rushing over pointed crags, formed numerous picturesque cascades, and swept along in noise and foam. Small brooks ran down to it right and left from the mountains, with green grassy margins that cheered and enlivened those otherwise savage and dreary regions. Sometimes these margins of green sward were flanked with huge blocks of stone, placed as regularly as if laid down by human hands, or rather by those of giants; and then, when we looked at the singular form of the surrounding rocks, out of which fancy could with little effort shape colossal villas, monuments, and statues, we were tempted to regard the whole region as a huge pleasure-ground laid out by some landscape gardener of the Titans.

Meanwhile the evening was closing in apace, so that we rode more slowly along. At times we thought we could see the village and the khan before us; for the rocks were often so singularly regular in their forms, that, at a little distance, we could have sworn they were houses. But, no! instead of coming to a better road, and among human dwellings, our path grew worse and narrower at every step, till it led us to the very edge of the Barrada, and there it suddenly ceased altogether. It was now so dark that we could not see an inch beyond our horses' heads, and they were continually slipping. Beside us brawled the rapid river, and above us were shelving cliffs, on which huge masses of stone lay, poised so insecurely, that it often seemed as if the slightest touch would be enough to send them thundering down on our heads.

There was now a sudden halt. The Bedouins in the front began to shout together; and we, not knowing what stopped them, cried out to them to go on, but their only answer was a loud "No! no!" Our perplexity may easily be imagined. None of us knew what was the matter in front, nor could any of us question the Bedouins. The poor Baron, being the nearest to the head of the line, made an attempt, though unwell, to pass the Bedouins and see what was the cause of the stoppage. But he was near paying dearly for the attempt, for when he forced his horse, which at first would not stir from the spot, to make a side movement, the animal slipped, with its rider, down the steep bank of the river, which the darkness concealed from us, and which we did not think so near us. Fortunately, a projecting rock some feet lower down enabled the horse to regain its footing. I dismounted

from mine on the opposite side, crept under its belly, and doubling as quickly as I could round the horses of the Bedouins, I got to the head of the line, whence I shouted to my companions the comfortless intelligence that our Bedouins had lost their way, and could go no further. Before me, however, but at some considerable distance from where we stood, I saw a fire blazing, to which a Bedouin had gone down on foot, hoping that the shepherd, or whoever else had lighted the fire, would come to our assistance as a guide.

In spite of the very unpleasant predicament we were in, I could not help crying out in admiration of the picturesque scene that here presented itself to me. Before us was a steep declivity, down which the Barrada leaped headlong; and below, by the water side, blazed a great fire, casting strange, unearthly gleams on the jagged rocks and small bushes around it. I thought of Wieland's Oberon, where Huon, who, like me, had lost his way in this very mountain, falls in with old Sherasmin.

It was not long before our Bedouin came up again, bringing with him the shepherd he had found below. It proved, as I had suspected, that we had missed our way at the entrance of the ravine where the path divided, and we now followed our new guide up a steep, grassy bank on our right. Taking example by the Bedouins we let our horses loose, and crept up after the shepherd, generally on all-fours. The poor animals followed us with great labour and difficulty, till we reached a little platform, whence our guide pointed out to us a few lights, far down below us in the valley, telling us that was Shiras, where we were to take up our quarters for the night. The descent on that side was just as steep as the ascent on the other. Fortunately we had a green sward and no rocks under our feet; but the ground was very slippery, and it was so dark we could not see our hands. Half running, half sliding, we were at the bottom of the steep bank much sooner than we expected; for our horses, in their affectionate attachment to our persons, made after us with headlong speed, and we had to make good use of our legs to escape being run over. Crossing a broad stone bridge, over the Barrada, and passing through a perfect labyrinth of rocks, we soon arrived at the entrance of the village, where we found a large khan, composed of several buildings.

Giovanni and the mookres were already in the court of the khan, but they did not know what to do, for there was not a soul in the place, nor did any one of the villagers show his face, notwithstanding all the shouting of our people. We could not find either room or stable without help. What, then, was to be done? The Baron, who was more unwell than he told us, had need of shelter and warmth; and when we began to unpack, in order to make the best of our present quarters, behold! our whole stock of charcoal was completely soaked through with snow-water. We resolved, therefore, to billet ourselves somewhere else by fair means or by foul, as in time of war; and with this intention the Prince, the Baron, and myself, rode into the village.

Just at the entrance we found a house with a forecourt, in which some Arab women were standing, but they scampered off the moment they saw us. I jumped from my horse and made after them into the house. When I stepped in, a couple of women set up a squall and hid themselves, and an old Arab lying by the fire would no doubt have followed their example, only he happened to be asleep when I popped in upon him; and when he awoke,

he could only gaze on me in speechless and motionless surprise, as if I had dropped from the sky. I made signs to him that I wanted shelter for the night for myself and two companions; and I found that my pantomime succeeded to admiration, particularly when I showed the old gentleman a few pieces of money. We called up Giovanni and the mookres, and soon made ourselves as snug as we could.

Interior of a House in Antilebanon.

Though our present quarters had not a vestige of what we call comfort and convenience in Europe, for there was neither a stool to sit on nor a bench to lie down on, still the place was a palace compared to that in which we had passed the preceding night. The interior of the house, as usual in the villages, consisted of two nearly equal portions, of which that next the door was occupied by cows, goats, asses, &c., while the other had a floor raised three or four feet higher, and was appropriated to the human inhabitants. There is usually no party wall between these two portions: the floor of the platform consists of earth, trodden hard, and is covered with mats, or with cheap carpets, according to the fortune of the proprietor. There was a fire-place in the corner, with a sloping flue, and the room was lighted by pieces of burning pinewood, supported by irons driven into the wall.

The people of the house, as I have said, had all hid themselves on my arrival among them, except one old man. But when we sat down quietly to warm our benumbed limbs at the cheerful fire, and laid aside our arms—when Giovanni had unpacked our coffee and tea-things, and set them out in goodly array, and had lighted small wax tapers in our travelling candlesticks,

all these outlandish objects so strongly excited the curiosity of our concealed hosts, that one by one they ventured to creep out from their hiding-places.

We had presently three or four women, young and old, and as many men and children, seated round us, gazing with the greatest astonishment on our clothes, our utensils, and ourselves. It was some time before they put full confidence in us; and once when I stood up to have a nearer view of the family, they all darted away again with loud screams.

When tea was ready we filled a large cup, sugared it plentifully, and sent it round among our hosts. The men and the old women seemed to like the flavour; but the two daughters of the house, fine, hearty-looking lasses, with sparkling coal-back eyes, and fortunately unveiled, tasted the beverage after much persuasion, but immediately gave back the cup with loud laughter.

After a couple of hours, during which the Prince and I took all the pains in the world to make ourselves amiable, we laid ourselves down on the ground to sleep, and the family did the same. We occupied the right side of the floor, and they took the left, whilst between us a space hardly a foot wide parted the West, of which I represented one frontier, from the East, whereof one flowery coast was symbolised in one of the pretty girls. So close a propinquity between the two camps might, perhaps, have been unfavourable to our repose, had it not fortunately happened that we were too much fatigued to concern ourselves about war and its alarms.

Mountain Village.

CHAPTER XV.

DAMASCUS—PUBLIC BATHS—BAZAARS—MERCHANTS' KHAN.

THE village where we left our friends in the last chapter is not known to geographers by the name Hackländer assigns it—Shiraz. No such village occurs in the list given either by Burckhardt or by the Rev. Eli Smith, the most recent and exact explorer of Syrian topography. The place, of which Hackländer probably has mistaken the name, seems to have lain somewhere between Zebdeni and Damascus. The road from it to the latter place, he tells us, continued for some hours through the valley of the Barrada. We, however, perfectly independent travellers as we are, who choose our own times and seasons, will here part company from him for the present, and put ourselves under other guidance, so as to visit the renowned city in the sunnier portion of the year.

The latter part of the route to Damascus may be considerably abridged by quitting the valley, and passing through a desert region, over sterile chalk mountains, unenlivened by a green leaf or a trace of vegetation. When near the top of the last hill he has to climb, the traveller will do well to look on the dismal arid waste he has left behind him. Cast your eye all round you, over a range of fully twenty miles in diameter, and, except the little green strip at some points visible along the Barrada, you will not discern either tree or bush, or any green thing. As the river runs in a deep channel, and the trees along it are low, it is only at a few places their tops can be seen. A more parched, desolate, and lifeless landscape, never wearied the eye or saddened the spirits.

But how changed is the scene, when dazzled with the glare of the sun and oppressed by heat, you clamber up the rocks to seek a moment's rest and shade under a small arched building, called Kobbet-el-Nazzar, which crowns the summit of the hill! The instant you reach it, one of the most magnificent prospects in the world bursts suddenly upon you. You look directly down, from an elevation of a thousand feet, on the city of Damascus and its unrivalled plain, with a revulsion of feeling almost amounting to extasy. The first view of Constantinople may be more picturesque; its seven hills, and the sea that washes it, give a greater variety of feature to the city of the Sultan; but there is a majestic loveliness in the aspect of Damascus much more captivating to the imagination.

An interminable plain seems stretched out beneath you; for the low chain of hills that bound it on the east, melt into the distant horizon, and are lost to sight as they mingle with the fiery sky of the great desert. In the foreground, an unbroken expanse of gardens and orchards advances up to the very foot of the cliff on which you stand, forming a circuit of more than fifty miles: in the midst of it, about two miles from the western hills, is the beautiful city, with its picturesque minarets, its domes, and glittering crescents, like a fleet riding at anchor upon a little sea of the most richly-variegated foliage.

There is a tradition current among the Mohammedans, that when their prophet beheld Damascus from the summit of the western hills, he was so transported by the beauty of the scene, that he halted suddenly and would not descend to the city. "There is but one paradise destined for man," he exclaimed; "as for me I am resolved not to choose mine in this world." The story is apocryphal, for Mohammed never had it in his power to enter Damascus: it was not till two years after his death that Khaled and Yezid, the two generals of Aboo-bekr, his successor, defeated Heraclius in a pitched battle near the city, which they took after a siege of six months, A. D. 634. Nevertheless, the fable has much meaning, even though it want historical truth. The imagination of an Arab from the parched Hedjaz could hardly have conceived the existence of a more enchanting oasis beneath the heavens. It owes its existence solely to the Barrada—"the Golden River" of the Greeks—which, after leaving the mountains, divides into seven branches; some of them flow directly to the city, and supply the public baths, and the countless fountains with which it is refreshed and adorned; the others, after being subdivided into numerous smaller channels, for the irrigation of the surrounding gardens, unite on the south-east of the city, and continue

View of Damascus from a Sheikh's Tomb near Salahieh.

in a single stream towards the eastern mountains, where they are lost in a marsh called Birket-el-Merdj. In these diverging branches of the same stream we may undoubtedly behold the "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus," which Naaman the Syrian thought "better than all the waters of Israel," and which the present inhabitants hold in scarcely less estimation.

One of the extremities of the city forms a circuit of ample and imposing

dimensions, while a narrow prolongation extends far away in the opposite direction, so that the whole shape is not unlike that of a mandoline. The zone of verdure that encompasses it consists entirely of gardens profusely watered: the trees planted in them are so numerous and acquire such an extraordinary size and vigour, that they more than supply every demand of the inhabitants for fruit, timber, and firewood; and yet, so bounteous is the climate, they do not at all impair the produce of the beds beneath them. The manner of irrigation and the peculiar features of the landscape, strikingly accord with the description of the orchard belonging to the enchanted castle, in the story of the third calendar in the Thousand and one Nights:

"This delicious orchard was watered in a very peculiar manner; there were channels so artificially and proportionably cut, that they carried water in considerable quantities to the roots of such trees as required moisture; others conveyed it in smaller quantities to those whose fruits were already formed; some carried still less to those whose fruits were swelling; and others carried only so much as was just requisite to water those which had their fruits come to perfection, and only wanted to be ripened. They far exceeded the ordinary size of the fruits in our gardens. Lastly, those channels that watered the trees whose fruit was ripe, had no more moisture than what would just preserve them from withering."

The writer must surely have studied his description at Damascus.

Damascus is, perhaps, the most ancient city in the world, and the only one that has enjoyed a continued, though not undisturbed, course of prosperity through so vast a succession of ages. It existed in the days of Abraham, and before them we know not how long. Founded before almost all those that afterwards rivalled or eclipsed it, it has seen them perish one by one, and sometimes so utterly as to leave no memorial to mark the place on which they stood. And yet Damascus has had its full share of the buffetings of war and civil violence. It became the capital of the kingdom of Syria, founded by Rehsin, was taken and sacked by Jeroboam, king of Israel, but soon recovered from the blow, for it was once more the metropolis of Syria long before the Seleucidæ had transferred the seat of their empire to Antioch. Under the Saracens, in the brilliant period of Arabian history, Damascus became, like Bagdad, the residence of the Caliphs. After this, sieges and disasters were no rare occurrences in its annals. Repeatedly was it swept with fire and sword, but never did it sustain so fearful a calamity as towards the close of the fourteenth century, when it was beleaguered by the ferocious conqueror Timur Lenk (Timur the Lame, or Tamerlane). For several days the black flag floated in vain on the Tartar's tent; and never had that signal of desolation been hoisted for three days on the same spot without the fulfilment of its fatal presage. At length the city was taken by storm, and the streets were deluged with blood. They still show, near the gate called *Babel Kabi*, the spot on which stood a pyramid of heads, the horrible monument of the victor's ferocity. Timur Lenk carried off with him the ablest artisans, after butchering the rest, desiring to enrich his capital, Samarcand, with all the arts of which he robbed Damascus.

Still Damascus is a great city. Whence does it derive its invulnerable

vitality? From its happy climate and soil, and its advantageous geographical position? If you ask of the learned among the Christian inhabitants of the city the cause of this strange phenomenon, they will tell you with the characteristic ardour and simplicity of their faith, that the blood of the first righteous man slain by his brother bedewed the soil of Damascus, and still cries unceasingly to Heaven for mercy and compassion towards the city erected on the scene of the first fratricide. On a spot, in the same range of mountains from which the traveller from the west looks down on Damascus, there is a small square monument, called *Nebi Abel*, revered both by Christians and Muslims: tradition asserts that it has been frequently rebuilt, but always on the very spot where Cain slew his brother Abel. It is said, too, that the name of the city, *Damasck* (a more ancient appellation than the Arabic *El Sham*), perpetuates the memory of the crime by its etymology, which, according to some philologists, is *dam* (Syriac and Arabic for *blood*) and *sakh (righteous, innocent) blood of the righteous.*

This legend seems to have been popular in England in Shakspeare's time; for he alludes to it in the First Part of *Henry VI.*, act 1, sc. 3.

> "This be Damascus; be thou cursed Cain,
> To slay thy brother Abel if thou wilt."

And now let us descend, from the observatory where we have sat so long, to the village of Salahieh, that beautiful suburb which we see just beneath us. It lies about a mile from the city walls, but is linked to them by a continuous range of gardens and orchards, studded with the gay country-houses of the rich citizens. We proceed for a while along a broad road, originally well paved, but now in bad repair, and then leaving it to the possession of picturesque groups of men and women, long strings of donkies and mules,

Ladies of Damascus.

and a few dromedaries, we strike off into a narrow lane, and make our way through the delicious shady environs to the Christian quarter. The reason

for this movement will appear upon reading Mr. Robinson's account of what befel him on his riding up to the principal gate by the road we have just left. The rough handling he received—a thing "that hath been and may be again"—occurred previously to the few years of Egyptian domination, during which the favoured Christians carried things with a high hand in the most Muslim city.

"I was well aware that Damascus was one of the few places remaining in the Turkish dominions where religious fanaticism drew a strong line of distinction between its Mussulman and Christian population. Many are the humiliations to which the latter are exposed. Here, for instance—and it was the same until lately at Cairo and Jerusalem—they are not allowed to enter the town on horseback. It was my intention to comply with the interdiction at the proper places; but being tired, I deferred the execution of it until I should reach the gates. My guide and servant, who were Christians, unfortunately betrayed me by alighting. Whilst riding carelessly along some hundred yards ahead of them, absorbed in my reflections, two or three ruffian-looking Turks ran suddenly up to me, and, seizing hold of the bridle of my horse, asked me, in an impetuous tone, if I were not a *Djaour*, or 'Infidel.' To avow my faith required no deliberation; but I could not help retorting, '*Ana Nazeran, Djaour deyil*'—'I am a Christian, not an Infidel.' No sooner had the words escaped my lips than I was torn violently from my horse, and loaded with a volley of imprecations. In a few minutes some hundreds of the inhabitants had collected round me, and I was apprehensive of becoming the victim of a popular tumult; particularly as my guides, who were better able to explain matters than myself, had become too much alarmed for themselves to interfere in my behalf. I therefore retired to the side of the road, and, sitting down on the bank, I endeavoured to disarm the infuriated mob by the attitude of resignation; for as long as their hostility—which arose from religious not personal motives—was confined to words, I knew what value to set upon it. But my pacific appearance had a contrary effect. Seeking a pretext for their conduct, some spots of green, the privileged colour, were discovered in my flowered turban, and it was instantly torn off my head. A young urchin—the devil take him—encouraged by this indignity offered me, walked up and spat upon my beard! This last affront for a moment robbed me of my equanimity, but I immediately recollected, and in time, that the slightest attempt at retaliation would be followed by instant death. Every man had a pistol or dirk in his girdle, and it would have cost him little to draw it out, and act upon the impulse of the moment. After appealing in vain to some sheikhs, or elders, who were standing by, I got up, and made the best of my way to the gates of the city, followed by a host of boys and women, throwing stones at us as we passed along.

"During the whole of this disgraceful scene, which lasted about half an hour, the women, *horresco referens*, were even more violent than the men. At one time I thought I should have died the death of St. Stephen at the gates of Damascus. Here the conflict subsided; nevertheless, I had the mortification of being myself obliged to pass along the streets, and through the crowded bazaars, on foot, my dress and person covered with mud and

other impurities, whilst the muleteers rode our horses before us, Mustapha wearing my turban on his head. This last part of the 'comédie larmoyante' he acted with such consummate insolence, that I joined heartily in the laugh directed against myself, to the no small astonishment of those who were looking on."

The Mustapha mentioned above was a Muslim *mookre*, or muleteer; he appears to have been a very savage and morose fellow. On the following day, Mr. Robinson solicited the good offices of M. Baudin, the able and estimable French agent in Damascus. "The result was that Mustapha, as the instigator of the whole affray, received two hundred bastinadoes on the soles of his bare feet, and so well applied that it is not likely he will be able to return to Tripoli as he came. He was, moreover, condemned to three months' imprisonment, but this last part of the sentence was, at my subsequent intercession, remitted. The news of a Christian having got redress for an insult offered to him by a Mussulman—unparalleled in the history of Damascus—was the subject of general conversation in the bazaars, and I was cautioned not to quit the house, at least for some days."

We were struck and astounded, on our immediate entrance into the city, by the vast number of blind and disfigured people, who presented quite a ghastly sight. Every third or fourth person we met was blind of an eye, and sometimes of both, an effect, we were told, of ophthalmia, which prevails here dreadfully, and in all places in Syria surrounded by land extensively irrigated.*

The quantity and profusion of fruit, the piles of enormous water-melons, pumpkins, radishes, and grapes heaped upon either side, presented a most striking appearance as we passed along.

Threading our way through some narrow streets, we arrived at the Franciscan convent, the courts of which were filled with enormous heaps of fine black grapes, which they were unlading from a string of camels before the door. The holy fathers seemed busily preparing a fine supply of wine for the ensuing year. On our arrival several messages were sent to the superior, and as many conferences held with our dragoman, until the important fact was satisfactorily established, that we were innocent of missionary merchandise, guiltless of the wish to evade pastoral prohibitions, and had no intention to disturb, by the distribution of bibles, the contented ignorance of the holy father's flock. This point being settled, a jolly friar, with a bunch of keys in his hand, showed us into a long room with no other furniture in it besides two or three old bedsteads, some very suspicious-looking mattresses, and an old chair. We made a general clearance, had the room swept, our carpets spread on the floor, and our beds upon them, the mosquito nets suspended, and, in half-an-hour, the aspect of the old room was wonderfully changed for the better.

The next important business was to throw off our dirty clothes and go to the bath. Here the proper and delicious custom, so often mentioned in the Arabian Nights, universally prevails, of going to the bath before putting on clean clothes. Every individual makes up his little bundle of clean things, and sends them down to the bath by a slave before he presumes at any time

* Addison, Damascus and Palmyra. 2 vols. Lon. 1838.

to change his habiliments. After roughing it in the country, sleeping in your clothes, in huts well stocked with fleas, and other vermin, it is easy to imagine the alacrity and delight with which the traveller packs up his change of dress, and sends it forward to the bathing establishment.

Preceded by our little bundles,* we were conducted to the principal bath of the city, called the Bath of Musk, to which we approached through a court ornamented with a fountain, which threw a stream of water twenty feet into the air, producing a sweet murmuring and a pleasant coolness. We entered through a small door into a vast circular apartment, surmounted by a large dome and paved with marble. In the centre a large fountain, bubbling over and rolling into a circular marble basin below, produced a refreshing coolness.

The scene, on entering, to a novice is very astonishing. Around the large circular hall were raised platforms or terraces covered with carpets and small beds, on and around which might be seen the most extraordinary grim figures imaginable, some, rolled up in towels and napkins, lay extended at full length smoking; others sat up sipping coffee. Some were divesting themselves of their garments, assisted by a black slave; and others were in a complete state of nudity, in the act of having a towel wound round their waists, just before going into the bath. They presented the most extraordinary and comic aspect imaginable, with their shaven heads and long beards, (the heads of all Mussulmen are shaved quite bare, with the exception of a tuft on the very top, which is left for the angel of the tomb on the day of judgment, say they, to grasp and carry them up to heaven by); besides these, other objects are seen wrapped up in towels, with black grisled beards tickling their breasts, and tottering along on a high pair of pattens, or rather stilts, at the imminent danger, as it appears, of breaking their necks. They push onwards to the bathing-rooms, while crowds of pale, waxy-faced attendants, all stark naked, with the exception of a towel wound round their waists, and with shining shaven crowns, are walking about with bundles of towels, cups of coffee, pipes and nargillas. The whole scene, although a busy one, is silent, ceremonious, and quite bewildering.

We were allotted a raised recess covered with carpets, upon which six little couches were quickly prepared, with cushions, and linen sheets spread over them; our little bundles of clothes were deposited by the side, and we commenced undressing. A naked attendant stood close at hand with towels; and as we were successively reduced to our last garment, he wound a towel round our waists. Being then completely stripped, a long towel was thrown over our shoulders, and another wound in the shape of a turban round our heads.

As we successively descended the platform, a pair of pattens, called kab-kabs, about a foot or a foot-and-a-half high, were placed for us to get into, to protect our feet from the wet, cold, marble pavement. I had not taken three steps in these unlucky machines, before I tottered and tumbled, and should have broken my head if I had not been caught and steadied by two of the attendants. I immediately shook off the detestable kabkabs, and walked on to the door of the bathing-rooms, where we were confounded by

* Addison.

a pack of naked, tallow-faced, shaven-crowned wretches, with pale bloodless skins, shiny, greasy-looking, and covered with perspiration, who rushed upon us, shouted at us, grinned and chattered, and poked us with their thin, lanky, white fingers. Not comprehending the nature of the attack, we were putting ourselves in boxing-attitudes; and should certainly have shortly astonished them as much as they did us, had not our dragoman, who was behind, told us that they were only contesting with each other which was to have the honour of serving us in the bath, and that we must each choose our man, whose services were indispensable inside.

We accordingly made our choice, and entered the first room, which was moderately warm, vaulted, and paved with marble; and then passed on through a suite of rooms, each succeeding one becoming hotter and more clouded with steam, through the dense atmosphere of which might be seen strange unearthly objects. Some lay extended on their backs upon the floor, where wild-looking naked men with bald heads were pounding and kneading them; some stood up to their knees in a large circular basin of hot water; some were seated on their haunches, covered from head to foot with soap-suds, which were lathered over them with an implement like a horse's tail; others were being drowned with hot water, which was poured over them in buckets; and others sat quietly smoking or sipping coffee on marble benches, unmoved by the puffing hah-ing, washing, and scrubbing around them; while old men with grey beards, and young boys without any beards at all, all equally in a state of nudity, were poking about, appearing, and then vanishing away again, in the fog.

We sat down on a marble bench in the last room of all, the atmosphere of which was very hot and oppressive at first. This, however, soon goes off, when a profuse perspiration breaks out, and trickles down from every pore; coffee was brought in and handed round to us, and then pipes. It is usual to rest about half an hour or longer, according to fancy, to allow a thorough perspiration to break out.

After talking and sipping our coffee for some time, the different attendants we had chosen came up and made overtures to us to come and be scrubbed, which we successively yielded to, as our pipes were finished and our coffee drunk; and we were each one of us successively conducted to some quarter of this or the adjoining room, under a cock of hot water. The following is a description of the process:—

An attendant, armed with a mohair glove, scrubs down every part of your reeking body and limbs, and quite shocks your feelings by the unaccountable quantity of impurities he brings off. You cannot help thinking it is all mistake; that monstrous quantity of *papier mâché* must surely be your skin which the fellow is stripping off; and, indeed, he rubs away with a will as if he meant to do so. At length, after some fifteen or twenty minutes currying, when nothing more comes away, he draws a long breath, ejaculates *Taieeb, taieeb!* (Good, good!) and pushes you down on your back to treat you to the *tuck-tuck-ah.* He pinches, squeezes, and kneads you all over; and beginning with your fingers and ending with your toes, he makes all your small joints crack with startling loudness. He then lays hold of your arms and legs, screwing and jerking the bone about in the

socket. In vain you shout to him to stop, he does not understand; or thinking, perhaps, that you are not satisfied with his exertions, he begins to work away faster and more furiously, swearing at the obstinate limb. Presently he twists your body about, first one way and then another, clapping his knee into the small of your back, till he has made every joint in your spine crack; and then he finishes off with your neck, seizing your head in both hands, and wrenching it round from side to side, till he has produced a series of detonations to his own satisfaction, if not to yours. This being done, he claps his hands, and shouts, "*Taieeb, taieeb, taieeb kateir!*" meaning thereby that the whole has been capitally done.

You are now made to recline beside a tank, in which floats a copper basin, containing boiling water and a small piece of fine soap. This is worked up to suds with a whisk made of fine fibres of the palm-tree: it is called a *leef*, and looks very like a horse's tail. You are lathered all over in prime style; eyes, nose, ears, and mouth coming in for their share: then you are soused with buckets of hot water from the tank, dashed over you in rapid succession till you gasp for breath; and at last you get up, nearer drowned, probably, than ever you were before.

When the whole is concluded, you have a long napkin fastened round your loins like a petticoat; another is thrown over your shoulders, and a third wound round your head; and you are then conducted back to the *beyt-owwul*, the apartment in which you had undressed.

This is a large, lofty hall, lighted from windows near the roof, with a fountain in the middle, and divans round the sides. You take your place on one of the divans, in a reclining posture; and an attendant brings you a small hand-mirror and a comb, that you may trim and curl-up your mustachios—if you have any. A small cup of coffee is then presented; your pipe, or *sheesheh*, is brought you, and you recline smoking for half an hour or so, while one of the attendants continues gently rubbing the soles of your feet, and another fans you with a large napkin.

After reading this account, our readers will, perhaps, be inclined to ask, as Lord Chesterfield did of fox-hunting, Do people ever bathe twice in this style? Strange as it may appear, the Orientals, both men and women, are passionately fond of indulging in this formidable luxury; and almost every European who has tried it, speaks with much satisfaction of the result. When all is done, a soft and luxurious feeling spreads itself over your body: every limb is light and free as air; the marble-like smoothness of the skin is delightful; and after all this pommelling, scrubbing, racking, parboiling, and perspiring, you feel more enjoyment than ever you felt before.

As you lie on the divan smoking, it is very amusing to watch the different strange figures coming in and going out; and the barbers going round to those who want their heads shaved, or the superfluous hairs removed from their bodies; the latter is accomplished by means of a mineral preparation which, as some pretend, is imported from Cos. Be this as it may, there is an artificial depilatory employed in the bath, called the *dawa* (or remedy), composed of quick-lime with about an eighth part of orpiment, or native essence. It is made into a paste with water, and loosens the hair in about two minutes, when it is washed off.

The whole cost of a bath such as we have described, everything included, is about sixpence to the natives: but unbelievers from Frangistan are privileged to pay as much more as they please.

At stated times in the day, generally twice a-week, the baths are reserved exclusively for the use of women, and men are not allowed to enter them on pain of death: the male attendants are, of course, all cleared away; and the whole establishment and furniture are taken possession of by females. Sometimes, when the bath is occupied by women, this is signified by suspending a napkin, or some other piece of drapery, over the door. The building is occasionally engrossed for the entire day by the fair sex; as, for instance, when it is visited by a betrothed bride just before her nuptials. An event of this kind is a very important affair with the ladies of Syria. The bath is the only place where they meet and amuse themselves in crowds: it stands them in lieu of ball-room, concert, theatre, and opera. A bridal bath is announced a fortnight beforehand—as a ball is in Europe. Luckily for us, Madame de Lamartine was invited to one of these entertainments at Beyroot; and has given us a description of a scene never to be looked on by a bearded face.

Two hundred ladies of the town and its environs had been invited on this occasion, and among them several Europeans. Each lady arrived at the rendezvous muffled, as usual, in a huge wrapper of white cloth. As they came in, they arranged themselves in groups on mats and cushions in the vestibule; their dark slaves and hired servants took off their wrappers, and they appeared in all the gorgeous splendour of bright colours and sparkling jewellery.

When the whole party was assembled, a wild music struck up. Women, with the upper part of their persons clad merely with a single fold of red gauze, uttered shrill and wailing cries, and played the fife and tambourin. This music never ceased throughout the day, and gave this scene of pleasure and festivity a character of tumult and delirium that was perfectly barbarian.

The betrothed lady made her appearance, accompanied by her mother and her young friends; and decked with such magnificence, that her neck, arms, and bosom were completely concealed by strings of gold coins and pearls, that hung upon her like chain mail. The fair bathers immediately fastened on her, and stripped her one by one of all her ornaments and her garments. The rest of the ladies had meanwhile been undressed by their slaves, and the different ceremonies of the bath commenced. The music continued as before, and the fair crowd passed from hall to hall with the oddest ceremonies and harangues. After the ladies had been steamed and washed, and heated in the manner already described as practised with men, perfumed waters were poured over them, and then began the grand fun of the day. In an instant all the two-hundred ladies were gamboling, romping, dabbling, splashing, throwing water in each other's faces, laughing, chattering, and squealing, like a parcel of boys let loose from school to frolic in the water; and whenever some childish trick excited a more than ordinary burst of laughter among the younger girls, the wild and unearthly music swelled the din with a louder flourish. At last the watery diversions of the day were closed: the slaves and servants arranged the moist tresses of their mistresses,

put on their necklaces and bracelets, and their silken and velvet robes and shalwars, spread cushions on the well-swept mats of the halls, and produced their baskets and silken wrappers containing materials for a pic-nic collation. This consisted of all sorts of pastry and confections, in which the Turks and the Arabs excel, with sherbet, orange-flower water, and all those iced beverages profusely consumed by the people of the East. Pipes and sheeshehs were forthcoming for the married ladies, and a cloud of perfumed smoke filled the air. Coffee was abundantly handed round in small cups, inclosed in filigree vases of gold and silver; and the ladies' tongues were not idle. The dancing women were now admitted, and performed Egyptian dances, and the monotonous evolutions of Arabia, to the sound of the same music as before. Thus passed the whole day; and it was not till night-fall that the revellers escorted the betrothed bride home to her mother's dwelling. This ceremony of the bath usually takes place the day before the wedding, and is ushered in by a more or less pompous procession, according to the rank and fortune of the fair one.

The procession generally pursues a circuitous route for the sake of greater display, and, on leaving the house, turns to the right: it is headed by men, bearing the linen to be used in the lady's ablutions, and the shirt, undress, &c. in which she is to array herself. Other men on either side flourish long white sticks, and a jester plays off his pranks for the diversion of the company and the spectators. Smoking censers perfume the air; and a band, in fanciful attire, makes a prodigious din with drums, cymbals, and other noisy instruments. They are followed by a row of married women, relations and friends of the bride; next comes a string of young virgins, closely veiled; and immediately behind them, under a canopy borne by four men, two figures are seen supporting a moving mass of silk and cotton,—an uncouth, shapeless bundle of drapery,—

"Sweetest nut hath sourest rind;"

that ugly shell, impervious to every eye, conceals within it *the precious pearl, the gazelle-eyed daughter.*

After sunset on the day succeeding the ceremony of the bath, another procession is made to escort the bride home to the house of her lord, carefully avoiding all those streets in which there are public baths; for it is considered unlucky for the bride to pass before them.

On these occasions the wife's dowry and effects are borne along at the head of the party; and when, as sometimes happens, the lady's fortune consists chiefly of household furniture, it is comical enough to witness the grand parade of bedding, coverlets, old cushions, pots, pans, kettles, gridirons, and all other domestic utensils; not packed away in a van, and covered over with a tarpauling, after the manner of the Franks, as if people were ashamed of their good gear, or had stolen it, but complacently displayed to the best advantage on the backs of mules and dromedaries, moving slowly along at the head of the party. Thus the procession takes its way to the bridegroom's house, men with baskets throwing sweetmeats to the crowd as it passes. The happy man always provides a handsome supper on the occasion, and has it served up in separate rooms, one for the gentlemen, the other for the ladies. After the repast, all the female friends of the bride, except those of her kindred, take their leave; and her relations conduct her to the nuptial chamber, where decorum requires that her husband should, for the first time in his life, behold her face.

Damascus is a true oriental city, and the least sophisticated of all the Muslim capitals. Here everything is eastern: there are no Frank quarters, no shabby beings wandering about in black hats and pea-green jackets, no fantastic aping of Frank customs and Frank follies by the command of an innovating sultan. The aspect of its streets certainly does not meet the expectation excited by its romantic appearance as viewed from a distance: they are narrow and irregular, and flanked with ugly dead walls: but broad streets are no luxury in a warm climate; and "here," says Dr. Richardson, "I felt the full force of the remark of Tacitus, that Nero spoiled Rome by broad streets." Those of Damascus are seldom of a width more than sufficient to allow two laden camels to pass each other without crushing the pedestrians, and many are of much narrower dimensions. They are the most noiseless possible: there are no wheeled carriages rolling along them, and the occasional step of a Christian's ass, a camel, a mule, or more rarely of a horse, does not much disturb the mysterious stillness in which the city appears wrapped, until you approach the bazaars and other places of busy resort.

The city contains a great many fine mosques, and, it is said, not less than five hundred private dwellings that might rank as palaces: but the interior magnificence of the houses adds nothing to the beauty of the streets, to which they present no more than dull mud walls, with one or two ill-made lattice windows at a considerable height. The houses are sometimes constructed on arches that hang across the streets, making it quite dark. Wooden rafters, too, when the arch has not been turned, are visible frequently from below, and render the way still more gloomy.

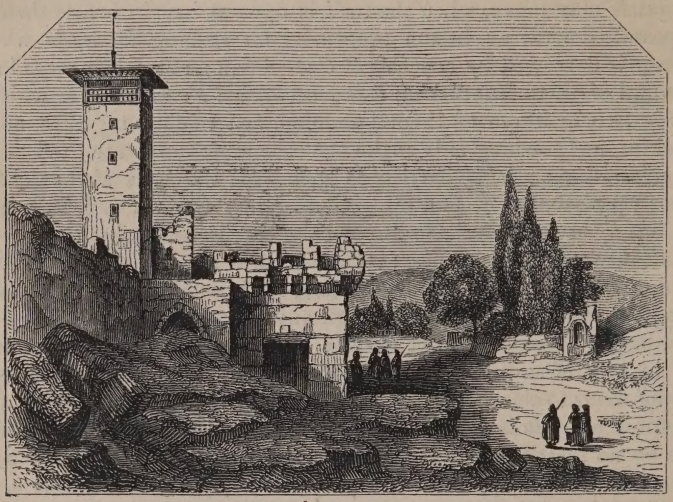
All great eastern towns are difficult to thread, but few in so great a degree as Damascus, from the perplexing intricacy of the narrow streets and of the many winding bazaars. Sometimes you are pinned up in a corner by a long

string of camels, that fill the whole breadth of the way; and sometimes you are run down and covered with filth by a whole line of donkeys, that trot heedlessly on with noiseless tread over the sandy soil. However leisurely these animals may move, when the road is open and plain before them, they are all possessed with an insane propensity for rushing forwards whenever the passage is narrowed by any casual obstruction; and when there happens to be several of them together on these occasions, a race ensues, which ends perhaps in two or three of them becoming fast wedged together, and then their kicking and pushing only make the case more desperate.

The streets have a large barrier at each end, which is always closed at sunset, or very soon after, as a protection against thieves, and, as some say, wives; but a very small bribe will open the barrier at any hour of the night, for there is always a gatekeeper at hand. It is not likely that these gates are of much use against solitary prowlers, for it would be an easy matter to run along the tops of the houses through any quarter of the city; and a man attacked in one house might not despair of making his escape by concealing himself in that of a distant inhabitant without passing through the streets. Their chief use is to check sudden insurrectionary movements. The guardianship of these barriers is usually committed to ancient and quiet watchmen, who are by no means in a hurry to answer those who knock. When at last the porter makes his appearance, a parley takes place: "Kimtur o,—who is that?" "Iba beled,—a townsman." "Wah hid Allah,—testify that there is one God." And thereupon the man on the wrong side of the door, whatever may be his impatience, must repeat the Muslim confession of faith; for it is argued, with touching simplicity, that no one who was abroad on a guilty errand would dare to utter the hallowed symbol. These impediments to free circulation through the streets by night are not felt as an inconvenience by the Orientals. The shops are all closed at the approach of dusk, and every true believer goes home to his own house, which he does not quit till the following morning. What should he do in the dirty streets? Behind the shabby walls that bound it, the Muslim has his own sufficient paradise, concealed from every prying eye.

Damascus possesses fewer authentic antiquities than might be expected in one of the earliest cities mentioned in the Bible: the most ancient remains are some of the lower portions of the walls, built with square stones, and in some instances of blocks, of which the height exceeds the breadth. Some of the blocks measure from six to eight or ten feet, by four, six, or eight. They are united without cement; and many have Arabic and Saracenic inscriptions on them. This style of building is one belonging to a very ancient period. The castle, like every place of strength in this country, has been destroyed, rebuilt, and altered at various periods. The oldest part, near the foundation, is formed of stones of a very great size; and the broad ditch which surrounds it is built in the rustic masonry of the Romans. Its extent is considerable. Erected before the invention of gunpowder, it could offer but little resistance to artillery; but, being constructed with large diamond-cut stones, and including eleven bastions within its circuit, some of them mounted with cannon, and all supplied with a guard, it is still capable of overawing the factious inhabitants of the town.

The direction of the street called "the Straight" corresponds, contrary to Turkish custom, with its ancient name, and leads from one of the gates to



One of the Gates of Damascus.

the citadel, which has probably always retained its present position. The dwelling of a rigid Mussulman covers a spot in this street venerated as the site of the house of Judas, where Saul of Tarsus lodged. In a different quarter, a curious substructure, resembling the crypt of a primitive church, is reputed to be the house of Ananias, who restored the Apostle's sight. A broken staircase descends through a great deal of rubbish to a spacious vaulted chamber, in the form of a Greek cross, which receives no other light than that from the entrance. A strange notion seems to prevail throughout the country, that, in earlier days, people burrowed in the earth; for all the houses exhibited as the abodes of celebrated or pious men, are in grottoes, or caves below the ground.

The eastern gate, now walled up, is memorable as the place where the Apostle was let down by the wall in a basket. They pretend to show the very house from which he thus made his escape; and whatever faith we may put in this tradition, it is, at least, a curious fact that, in a fortification of the present day, houses still stand on the walls with their windows towards the country, and immediately overhanging the ditch in a manner so likely to facilitate escape, and even to afford entrance to an enemy. This, at any rate, proves how little Damascus has changed from its earliest days.

The Christians have here a large uninclosed cemetery, much visited by them; and near it is a tomb, enclosed in a wooden cage, and said to be that of the warder, traditionally called St. George, who, having become a Christian, allowed the Apostle to escape, and afterwards suffered martyrdom for his zeal and humanity. There is an arch in the burial-ground, where, it is pretended, St. Paul hid himself after his descent from the wall.

In a wide, open road beyond the cemetery, about a quarter of a mile from the gate, is a place still highly venerated as the supposed scene of Saul's miraculous conversion. The present track deviates now from the straight line, leaving a few yards to the right, the precise spot believed to be that where he fell to the earth. This is evidently a portion of an ancient road, consisting entirely of firmly-embedded pebbles, which, having never been broken up, stands alone like the fragment of an elevated causeway. The sides have been gradually lowered by numerous pilgrims, who, in all ages, have sought the pebbles to be preserved as relics. A wide arch-like excavation through the centre of the causeway, produced by the same superstitious industry, has given it the semblance of a dismantled bridge. Through this aperture it is considered an act of devotion to pass; and the pious may sometimes be seen performing the ceremony with all due solemnity, rubbing their shoulders against the pebbly sides, and repeating their prayers with exemplary earnestness.

The other principal gates are, the Gate of the Camels, leading to the rendezvous of the Arabs; the Paradise Gate—a large one, with a gloomy archway, leading into a bustling bazaar, near the centre of the south wall; and the greatest thoroughfare of all, the "*Bab Tooma*," or gate of Thomas, so called, probably, in memory of the brave Christian champion who so nobly but fruitlessly withstood the Saracen besiegers.

Among the whimsical works in the city and its neighbourhood, there is one carried on at this gate to a great extent. Several men, with their arms bare, are pulling with all their strength, for several hours a day, at what appear at first unusually long hanks of white yarn: at length, you discover that the cables are made of flour and sugar, which, when well kneaded together in this manner, is allowed to grow crisp, and sold as the favourite sweetmeat in the bazaars.

The bazaars of Damascus are better lighted, and have a more elegant and airy appearance than those of Cairo and Constantinople. They are very agreeable lounging-places, and offer an endless fund of amusement to the European stranger, whose eyes are bewildered amid the gay colours of the various articles exposed for sale, and the groups that are seen passing and repassing in all the different costumes of Syria and of many other Eastern lands. Here you meet agas, moving with slow and stately tread, dressed in white turbans and crimson and scarlet silk cloaks edged with costly fur, with diamond-hilted khandjars and yataghans gleaming in their girdles. They are followed each by five or six obsequious retainers, and a black slave carries their pipes and scarlet and blue cloth tobacco bags, adorned with sprigs and fruit embroidered in gold. Swarthy and grim-visaged Hawara Arabs, and Bedouins from the Great Desert, with their coarse cloaks hanging upon them like the drapery of an ancient statue, congregate round the shops of the tobacconists, the saddlers, and the armourers. Sometimes the crowd is obliged to fall back and open a passage to a procession of great men on horseback, or of culprits led about the streets as an example to the people. The latter are preceded by a man shouting out their crimes, and calling upon all to take warning. Women are as numerous as men in these places, and make all the household purchases. The shopmen have

an air of gallantry in their way of dealing with their muffled customers, that seems to invite them to linger about their purchases; and frequently one

Hawara Arabs.

may notice groups of fair ladies remaining an unconscionable time to listen to the soft tones of the shopkeeper. Black slave-girls generally attend the better class of women in the bazaar, as carefully veiled, however, as their mistresses; and it is only by the peculiar white of the eye they can be distinguished.

The shops of all kinds being open, everything is done in public. If a merchant is put in a passion by a customer, he jumps up among his bales, and storms and raves to his heart's content without the least interruption. Each commodity has its own peculiar mart; if you chance to want boots or shoes, you will be directed, on inquiry, to a bazaar filled from end to end with piles of red and yellow boots, shoes, and slippers for both sexes. There are always very entertaining doings to be witnessed in the ready-made clothes shops, where cheapness is more regarded than fashion; and the poorer classes dress themselves in all the costumes of the East. They try the articles on either in the midst of the thoroughfare or on the board of the tailor, and loungers stop frequently to offer their opinions on the style and fit. There is a singular ostentation in the display of new clothes in the East, from some superstitious feeling perhaps, for the ticket is never taken off the turban or the shawl round the waist until their novelty is completely worn away. The gayest Turks in Damascus strut with greater pride when the mark of the shop dangles from their heads. Sometimes, you observe the corner of a piece of Manchester manufacture spread over the folds of the turban it composes, and showing the name of the makers stamped on it in large blue letters: an English firm is thus converted into a decoration for a Turkish beau, or an emblem of gratitude to providence.

But if you would see all the humours of this perennial fair in their highest perfection, go between ten and twelve o'clock, when the auctions are going on. The bazaars are then crowded to excess, and the noise is prodigious. The staid Orientals quite forget all their usual gravity and sedateness, and run about and bellow like bedlamites. Second hand goods, old clothes, and bedding are sold in this way. Men hurry through the crowd with the different articles hoisted on their heads, or flourish them about in their hands, and the seller screams out the bidding. Pale fellows, with one eye, are rushing like demoniacs in every direction, shouting at the top of their voices, and crowds of women are bidding with all the keen relish for "a bargain," confessed by thrifty housewives all the world over.

Shop of a Dealer in Clothes.

The manufacture of the celebrated Damascus swords no longer exists. The weapons offered for sale by the armourers are of a very ordinary character. Some specimens of the old manufacture are still met with; they pass as heirlooms, from hand to hand, and are esteemed exceedingly precious. The blade of one presented to Lamartine cost the pasha who had owned it five thousand piastres. Many Turks and Arabs, he tells us, who prize these weapons above diamonds, would give all they had in the world for such a blade; their eyes sparkled with admiration at the sight of it, and they pressed it reverently to their foreheads, as if they adored so perfect an implement of death.

A scimitar, to be perfect, ought to be broad in the blade, and its length, from hilt to point, should be exactly equal to the distance from the tip of the ear to the fist, as you stand upright, with your arm by your side. If the steel gives a clear crystalline sound when you twitch the point with your nail, you may be satisfied of the good temper of the weapon. Such is the keenness of edge of which the best blades are susceptible, that it is a common amusement with the Turks to cut through down pillows or silk handkerchiefs, as they are thrown at them. Weapons are as frequent a subject of conversation among the men, as jewels and fashions are among the women, of the

Levant. The Turks have a peculiar knack of bringing the discourse to bear upon a topic so gratifying to their vanity. You will often see them unsheath their scimitars in the middle of a repast, and hand them across the table to each other. Their mode of presenting the weapon to the scrutiny of an amateur, is exceedingly graceful. Twirling the hilt round in their hands, so as to bring the blade under their arm, they present the hilt to him with a bow and gesture of the hand, signifying the entire sacrifice of their person.

Among the lost arts of Damascus appears to be the manufacture of the splendid silk damask interwoven with gold, which is seen in some of the richest houses, but is not easily to be found in the bazaars. The present manufactures are red leather shoes and slippers, a variety of silver work, a very durable mixed stuff, of silk and cotton, in general wear throughout Syria, some of the patterns of which are remarkably handsome; and some very neat cabinet work, chiefly in the form of boxes and coffers. This latter is a particularly important branch of trade, since the principal furniture of an Arab family consists in one or two chests, in which they keep their clothes and other movables. Most of these boxes are of cedar, painted red, and studded with gilt nails in various devices. Some are inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, or finely carved in relief. The smell of cedar wood pervades the whole bazaar, and mingling with the thousand different perfumes exhaled by the shops of the grocers and the druggists, and with the incessant smoking of countless pipes, fills these places with a peculiar atmosphere of their own.

The Armenian gold and silversmiths carry on their trade in what was once a Christian church: it is parted off into alleys, where the workmen sit with fire, bellows, anvils, hammers, pincers, drawers, and so forth; and the ear is stunned with the incessant clattering on all sides. Old men with sallow faces and gray beards are seen poring over ingots of gold and silver, melting the metal in pots and pans on charcoal fires, or drawing it out into long wires, and hammering it into different shapes; and people are constantly coming in with rings, bracelets, silver filigree baskets, and various kinds of jewellery to be repaired, or to serve as patterns for articles to be made to order. The jewellers display little taste or skill in setting their precious stones or pearls; but the stocks they possess are considerable. These men are a numerous class: they make no great display of their tempting wares, but lock them up in small caskets, only bringing them out when a customer calls for a jewel.

The saddlers are the most numerous and the most ingenious workmen in Damascus: they occupy a long handsome bazaar at the northern end of the town. The floor is covered with skins on which men, horses, and dromedaries walk, and which are placed there to be turned into leather, after having been steeped in an astringent liquid made from the husk of the pomegranate. The scarlet and blue housings, embroidered in gold and silver; the gay bridles, martingales, breast and head pieces decorated with beads, bits of silver, silk, shells, or tassels; the saddles, some of red leather and some covered with purple and blue velvet brocaded with silver and gold thread, either finished and exposed for sale, or in the act of being made, give this bazaar a very gay appearance. Nothing can surpass the beauty and splendour

of the trappings made to be worn on state occasions by the horses of the Arab chiefs or of the agas. The prices of all these rich articles are greatly below the European standard. Two of the most sumptuous of these bridles cost Lamartine together about two pounds sterling.

A variety of other manufactures of minor importance are met with; but British goods have now taken the place of many of the inferior native fabrics; and many articles which used to be brought from India by the Persian Gulf, and reached Damascus by the caravans from Bagdad, are now imported direct from London and Liverpool to Beyrout. The principal articles of import are cotton goods, cotton twist, iron, hardware, West India produce, indigo, and cochineal. The bazaar of the mercers displays an extensive assortment of Manchester and Glasgow calicoes, muslins and printed goods, and a few articles of Swiss manufacture.

Among the shopkeepers we must not forget the barbers, those dear old friends with whom the Arabian Nights have put us on so cordial a footing of intimacy. With that easy suavity for which their fraternity is renowned all the world over, they invite the passers by to enter and submit their heads and faces to their beautifying fingers. Their shops are always full of customers. They are long narrow rooms, with benches on each side, on which a dozen Turks may sometimes be seen squatting in a line, with their bare heads, already shaved, poked out in the most patient manner, to be kneaded between the hands of the barber, who rolls them about as if they were balls, quite unconnected with the shoulders they belong to. The barbers of Damascus are celebrated for taste and skill in all the mysteries of the toilette, including the art of imparting to the beard and mustachios that dark glossy hue so anxiously and universally coveted. The important affair of arranging the turban is their daily business, and the becoming variety displayed in the disposition of the turbans worn by the gallants of the city, does infinite honour to these meritorious artists. It is pleasant to know that such men continue to enjoy a due share of consideration in the East, and that their talents often raise them to affluence. When Mr. Carne's party wished to hire a separate residence in Damascus, they were recommended to a barber who had become a sort of capitalist, and was possessed of some houses. The old gentleman, extremely well dressed, with a goodly length of beard, was always found seated at his ease, smoking or chatting with some of his friends. He wished the Englishmen to take a luxurious apartment of his, situated on a terraced roof: it was profusely gilded; the cushions of the deewan were as white as snow; and it commanded a superb view of the mountains. But the barber's wife was by far the more zealous part of himself, and protested with loud clamour, that infidels should never sully the purity and beauty of her deewan, and after a warm dispute the good man was forced reluctantly to give way. He related that when Bonaparte and his army were in Syria, he and many others in Damascus took up arms and marched a great distance to fight with the Giaours for the honour of the Prophet. "They were full of zeal; and our forces," said the old man, "soon had an action;—we were beat, and I received a severe wound; and when they carried me with them in the retreat, in an agony of pain I cried out, 'What had I to do with Giaours? Go to hell all the world!'"

Of all the shops in the city, those of the apothecaries afford the most whimsical, and those of the dealers in eatable commodities the most agreeable spectacle, both from the excellence of their dainty stores, and from the neatness and elegance with which they are arranged. Fruit and vegetables are found in abundance; there you behold, as the Arabian author has it, "the mingled colours of the apple, resembling the hue upon the cheek of a beloved mistress, and the sallow countenance of a perplexed and timid lover; the sweet smelling quince, diffusing an odour like musk and ambergris; and the plum, shining as the ruby." Taste those enormous grapes. Are they not delicious? They come from Davani, a village about an hour and a half south-west of Damascus,—and thereby hangs a tale. One day when Mohammed was on a visit to his friend the angel Gabriel, he expressed a wish to taste the grapes of Paradise; a bunch was immediately brought him, and as the Prophet ate he threw away the seeds, which fell to the earth just on the spot where the village of Davani now stands; hence the origin of these grapes, so wondrously delicious. Even the earthborn fruits are not unworthy of companionship with those of celestial stock. The peaches, nectarines, and apricots, are excellent; a species of the latter, called *loosi*, possesses the most exquisite flavour; and the various conserves prepared here are marvels in their way. It must have been the cook to the Peris that gave the Damascenes the receipt for making tarts of rose leaves—ethereal luxury! Why do we not import some thousand tons of it to feed our poets withal? Stop a moment. What have we here? This is not the mercers' quarter; we are among the confectioners. What then can the brown stuff be this shopkeeper is unrolling, and from which he cuts off some *pics*, and hands them to a customer? Assuredly, no one would ever guess that the article thus sold by the yard, and that looks as if you might make a cloak of it, was a sort of confection composed of dried apricots.

Apothecary of Damascus.

No people in the world seem so curious in their bread as those of Damascus; its flavour is very agreeable, and it costs almost nothing: some of it is in the form of flat thin cakes, big enough almost to serve as a carpet. Those who are fond of pastry may regale themselves at any hour in the day; a great variety of it is always to be had hot from the oven. But the greatest treat to the stranger is the delicious iced sherbet, which is here a very important article of consumption. It is made in various ways, from the juice of figs, lemons, grapes, and pomegranates, and the petals of roses and violets. The last, which is the most esteemed kind, is prepared from a hard conserve, made by pounding the flowers and boiling the pulp with sugar.

The sherbet, in whatever way made, is mixed with iced water, and there is generally a lump of ice floating in the crystal or porcelain cup from which it is drunk. The cup is usually presented on a tray covered with a fine muslin napkin, embroidered with silken and golden flowers; and on the right arm of the person who carries the tray, is hung a long napkin with a rich embroidered border, with which you make a fashion of wiping your lips.

The bazaars, like the Palais Royal of Paris, have their restaurants, where the merchants or the loungers may find dinner. Tables and covers are, of course, out of the question. The purchaser provides himself with one of the cakes we have mentioned, which serves him at once for bread, plate, and napkin, and the cook supplies him with little pieces of baked mutton about the size of nuts, stuck on a skewer, somewhat in the fashion of our cat's meat. A man, says Lamartine, might fare of the best in Damascus for two piastres a day; the common people live for less than half that sum. He might hire a very pretty house for two or three hundred piastres a year; so that, all expenses included, he might live at his ease upon an income of fifteen or sixteen pounds a year. It is the same all over Syria.*

A Cavass.

On our first visits to the bazaars we were attended by Giorgio Zaraa, the cavass of the convent, a superlatively fine fellow, who strutted before us with such pomposity that even the grave Turks could not help laughing at "the father of a jackass." One of the many stories told us by this worthy seems worth repeating, as at least characteristic. When he took us to see the underground chapel of Ananias, which is connected with his own residence, he related to us that not long before, Ananias appeared in the night to one of his children, who had been put to sleep there, and that when the young Christian began to scream the holy man threw a stone at his head.

Seeing so much around that reminded us of the Arabian Nights, we

* Very great changes have taken place in the value of commodities in Syria since Lamartine travelled there.

asked Giorgio to procure us a copy. He took us into the book bazaar close to the mosque, but our inquiries at the first two or three book-stalls were unsuccessful; the work we were told was very scarce and very dear, but we presently found an old man with a long pale face and gray beard, who said he would procure us a copy beautifully written on the following day. We asked about other books, and then inquired for a copy of the Koran:—that instant his eyes flashed fire; his beard wagged with indignation, and he shouted at the pitch of his voice, *Yallah, yallah!* "Go, go, get you gone!" with sundry uncourteous expressions and rude epithets, among which that of infidel dogs was more than once repeated. Finding all further negotiation broken off for the present, we made as decent a retreat from the spot as we were able. It is considered sinful by the Muslims to allow the sacred book to be profaned even by the touch of an infidel, and no strict follower of the prophet will sell a koran to a Frank; but it may generally be obtained through some less scrupulous agent, who will buy it for you.

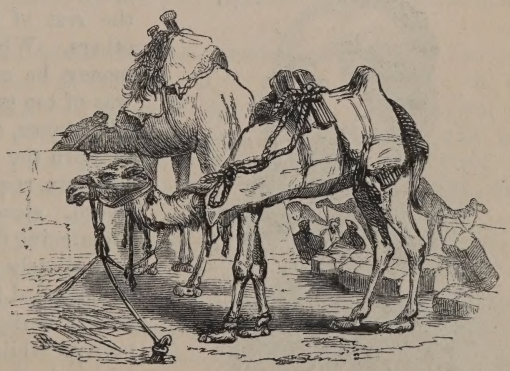
The wholesale merchants of Damascus have their warehouses in the great khans or caravansaries: that built by Assaad Pasha is the handsomest in all the East. The entrance is from one of the bazaars near the great mosque, and leads into a spacious court beautifully paved with broad, smooth, flags. In the centre is a fountain and tank, at which the mules and camels drink. The court is surrounded by an arcade, beneath which are warehouses and staircases leading to an open gallery above, along which are ranged the counting-houses of the merchants. The masonry is in alternate courses of black and white stones, in the manner peculiar to the Saracenic style; the roof, supported by pillars and arches, consists now of six domes; the three centre ones having been thrown down, it is said, by an earthquake, their place is filled by large beams. The lofty arched and vaulted gateway is a very striking object; it is sculptured with the most elaborate richness of detail, and is one of the most imposing specimens of what we are accustomed to call Moorish architecture in the world. Yet a century has not elapsed since this khan was built. A capacity for the arts is not extinct among a people whose architects can design, and whose workmen can execute, such a monument as the Khan of Assaad Pasha. These khans are generally built by rich pashas, who bequeath them to their families or to the community. They yield large revenues.

The following highly characteristic sketch of the manner of doing business in this merchants' exchange is given by Major Skinner in his amusing account of his overland journey to India.

In the front of each store, into which no person is ever permitted to enter that is not connected with it, is a platform, where the merchant reclines on his carpet until customers come to interrupt his meditations. Business never begins till near midday; the great doors are locked till that hour; and a porter, who is paid by a small tax on each store, is responsible for the safety of the property within them. The great occupation seems to be smoking. A man stands by the reservoir with a pan of charcoal, ready to give light to the numerous pipes around, and lets out water-pipes to the servants of the merchants, and those loungers who come in for no other purpose than to indulge in them.

The utter apathy of all is striking in a commercial mart. You may visit it at all hours and never observe the least appearance of activity. The manner of dealing is the most tiresome that can be conceived; a conversation must occupy at least a third of a day before a bargain can be struck. The intended purchaser, after wishing peace, jumps up and seats himself by the side of the merchant, who, perhaps, immediately offers him his pipe. The goods are then displayed, and a price named, that seems, without reference to the value of the article, to be merely thrown out as a challenge to argument. The debate soon grows loud; the greatest anger seems to exist between the parties, and an instant rupture to be about to take place, when, "Come nearer," one cries to the other, and they draw as close as possible, and continue some minutes whispering in the same mysterious manner. Suddenly the muezzin's call to prayer breaks upon their ears; up they rise, and shuffling away to the basin, squat on its brink to perform the necessary ablutions; then returning to their carpets, they pass half an hour in prayer. A stranger to an Eastern city would, indeed, be confounded on entering the great exchange, to find all the merchants on their knees, their heads bowed in adoration towards the same point. The ceremony over, they return to their bargains with clear consciences, at any rate upon one score. The gravity of the scene is sometimes disturbed by the cries of itinerant bakers, who carry most excellent bread in trays upon their heads, and dealers in sherbet, who attract notice by clinking their brass cups like cymbals.

Very little seems in this mart, as in the more humble bazaars, to be sufficient to establish a merchant. Hadji Baba might bring his cherry-sticks here and lay the foundation of a fortune. The most singular visitors to the khan are the Bedouins, who flock in crowds, seeking to let their camels out for hire, and stare about them as if they had suddenly dropped among animals of another species. Occasionally singing women make a round of the building, screeching opposite each person, till their frightful yells extract something from him. These singers are generally Egyptians, and wear the blue cotton shifts common in that country, with the black handkerchief over their faces. There is no end to beggars, whose importunity in this city exceeds all comparison; they lay hold of passengers by the skirts or the sleeves, and keep them fast, till, by a few coins, they purchase a ransom.



Baggage Camels.

Turkish tyranny is one of those things that change least with the changes of the times. The best paved street in Damascus is that in which stands the front of the Franciscan convent. It was in such bad order some years ago that the monks resolved to repair it whenever their finances would allow them to do so. They at length commenced the work, to the great joy of the Christian population, who would have a capital place to lounge in during the various offices of their festivals. The governor took no notice of the work during its progress, but when it was finished he sent to demand on what authority they had dared to improve a street in Damascus, and ordered them instantly to pay 30,000 piastres to secure the privilege of walking upon it. The poor monks were in despair, and declared they could never hope to afford so exorbitant a sum. The pasha seized the superior and put him in prison, with the determination to keep him until he should be ransomed by his brethren. This was at length effected, and fifty yards of pavement were gained to the church.

The monks had many other sad tales to tell of extortion and ill treatment. Private insult was so common, that they never opened the door to a Turk, for none ever knocked without the intention of plundering them. Their greatest torment was executed by the Egyptian governor, Sheref Pasha, who managed the matter in the good old way of the East.* He had sent for him to answer some complaint; instead of immediate obedience, the offender struck the messenger, when a party of soldiers was sent to bring him by force to the presence. He was a man of great wealth and influence in the city. "You have resisted my servant," said the Pasha on his approach. "I have," was the reply. "Then off with his head!" and it was struck off within a few paces of the divan, where the body lay for the rest of the day, as a lesson to others. Whenever this man wanted money, he called on the monks: he was of too great power to be refused admittance, and they were compelled to open the door to him; he named the sum required, and, drawing his sword, stood in the court yard threatening death to all if it were not immediately paid. When he received it, he called for a bottle of aquavitæ, and in derision drank to their prosperity, while he insisted on their joining in the pledge.

Father Tommaso.

Close to the Franciscan is a convent of the Capuchin order, where, until February, 1840, resided one solitary friar, who had been for many years a recluse in the populous city. This was that father Tommaso whose sup-

* Speaking of Sherif Pasha, Monro says—"An English resident remarked to me, 'In short, sir, he is just the boy for the Christian; he takes off the Turks' heads like artichokes.'" His own head was taken off by Ibraham Pasha after the reverses that befel the Egyptian cause in Syria.

posed murder was, without a shadow of reasonable proof, attributed to the Jews. The consequence, as every one knows, was the savage persecution of an unoffending people, perpetrated by a bigoted multitude and their ruffian governor, at the instigation and with the active co-operation of the French consul, M. Ratti Menton. And M. Thiers, then minister for foreign affairs, sanctioned this man's conduct, and took its everlasting infamy to himself, and to his noble France—France, the generous, the disinterested, the land that abhors the oppressor, and overflows with sympathy for the oppressed.

Damascus is celebrated for the number and elegance of its coffee-houses; they are for the most part built in the kiosk fashion, of wood painted different colours, green and blue predominating, and open on the sides, except where partially closed with plants coiling up the slender columns that support the roof. The softened light that makes its way through the leafy walls forms a charming contrast with the intense glare of the sun glancing upon the waters, or reflected from the whitened walls of the houses of the town. Nor are they more remarkable for their picturesque appearance than for their happily-chosen position, being generally situated on the border of some running stream, the view opening out on a pretty cascade, with gardens and orchards lying on the opposite bank. At night, when the lamps, suspended from the slender pillars, are lighted, and Turks of different ranks, in all the varieties of their rich costume, cover the platform, just above the surface of the river, on which and its foaming cataracts the moonlight rests, and the sound of music is heard, you fancy that if ever the enchantments of eastern romance are to be realised, it is here.

The pleasures enjoyed in these places are usually of the silent kind; but sometimes they are enlivened by the performances of professional dancers, story-tellers, or singers.

The recitation of eastern fables and tales partakes somewhat of the nature of a dramatic performance. It is not merely a simple narrative; the story is animated by the manner and action of the speaker. A variety of other story-books, besides the Arabian Nights, furnish materials for the story-teller, who, by combining the incidents of different tastes, and varying the catastrophe of such as he has related before, gives them an air of novelty even to persons who at first imagine they are listening to tales with which they are acquainted. He recites, walking to and fro, in the middle of the coffee-room, stopping only now and then when the expression requires some emphatical attitude. He is commonly heard with great attention, and not unfrequently, in the midst of some interesting adventure, when the expectation of his audience is raised to the highest pitch, he breaks off abruptly, and makes his escape from the room, leaving both his heroine and his audience in the utmost embarrassment. Those who happen to be near the door endeavour to detain him, insisting on the story being finished before he departs; but he always makes his retreat good; and the auditors, suspending their curiosity, are reduced to return at the same hour next day to hear the sequel. He no sooner has made his exit than the company in separate parties fall to disputing about the characters of the drama or the event of the unfinished adventure. The controversy by degrees becomes serious, and

opposite opinions are maintained with no less warmth than if the fate of the city depended on the decision.

Damascene Coffee House.

The vocal music, to a European ear, seems at first not less uncouth than the Arabic language; and it seldom happens that time, which by degrees reconciles one to the language, does more for the music, than to render it merely tolerable. There is, in particular, one species of song, between an air and a recitative, named Mowal, which is held universally in the highest esteem. It is performed by a single voice, unaccompanied by instruments, and the singer placing a hand behind each ear, as if to save the drum of that organ from destruction, exerts his voice to the utmost stretch. The subject of the poetry is generally of the plaintive kind. Some hapless wight laments the absence of his mistress—recalls the memory of happier times, and invokes the pale moon, or the listening night, to bear witness to his constancy. The performer frequently makes long pauses, not only between the stanzas, which are very short, but in the middle of the line, and taking that opportunity of recovering breath, he begins anew to warble, swelling his notes till his wind is quite exhausted. Fond as the natives are of this Mowal, there are few strangers who can hear it with any patience, or without lamenting the perversion of voices, which often are strong, clear, and wonderfully melodious.

When the charm of novelty is worn off, Europeans are apt to complain of the monotony and want of amusement in these places, where they find no public papers, no political or other gossip, nothing to keep alive that brisk current of national or local interest that enlivens our places of social resort. But

the men of the East know nothing of that restless activity that animates the Frank, and makes exertion of body or mind a craving of his nature that must be satisfied even in his moments of recreation. The habits of their lives present but two phases—excited energy, and profound repose. To act is, according to their way of thinking, to suffer, and they cannot understand the possibility of people wilfully putting themselves to trouble, when there is absolutely no necessity for their doing so. The Mussulman's bliss is expressed in the word *kieff*—a word incapable of being translated, because the peculiar kind of abstraction it signifies is unknown in the western world. It is not the *far-niente* of the Italian, for that amounts to no more than a simple negation of action; but *kieff* implies besides this, a brooding over passive animal enjoyment—a state of feeling like what we may guess the ox to experience when he lies down to ruminate in pleasant pastures, or that sweet consciousness of *un*waking bliss we sometimes feel at morning in bed, when we are just able to entertain one thought—"Now I am asleep."

Here then, in these coffee-houses, the Muslims sit the live-long hours, seemingly as phlegmatic as Dutchmen, smoking, sipping coffee, and conversing after their way, that is, with an interval of a quarter of an hour between every two phrases. Do not, however, conclude too hastily that the thoughts and passions of busy life never molest the somnolent genius of the place. Perhaps, at the very moment you are wondering at the listless apathy of the smokers, you are unconsciously assisting at the noiseless birth of one of those revolutions that so often deluge Damascus with blood. The leaven works silently and unseen for a long while, till at length its effects break out when least expected. The people side with one party or another, and fly to arms under the conduct of one of the agas, and the government passes for a time into the hands of the victor. The vanquished are put to death, or escape to the deserts of Baalbec or Palmyra, where the independent tribes afford them an asylum.

The mosques in the city are numerous, and the principal ones are very fine; but they lose much of their effect from the confined space in which they stand. Christians are not allowed to visit their interior, nor is it safe for them even to pause too long in passing before them. The great mosque was once the cathedral of St. John, and is said to be the largest and most splendid of all the churches erected by the early Christians in this country. The mosque of the durweeshes has the finest minarets in Damascus, and another is remarkable for having its minarets, which are of great height and grandeur, cased with enamelled tiles of a rich green colour: the reflection of the sunshine from this iridescent surface produces a splendid effect. Many of the mosques were built by the caliphs as mausoleums; they possess courts, porticos, and fountains, and some are overshadowed by a few green trees, among which sacred doves may be heard cooing.

The great mosque stands on an elevated position nearly in the centre of the city. It was once surrounded by an open area, but this is now so encumbered with buildings that the gate can only be approached through a bazaar filling up an arcade of ancient columns, perhaps the remains of a

stately entrance. The outer court, which is very spacious, is paved with marble; it has a large fountain in the middle, and on three sides a cloister consisting of two tiers of pointed arches, supported by Corinthian columns. Mr. Buckingham, who enjoyed the rare privilege of inspecting the interior of the building, speaks of its vast dimensions as most imposing.

All the mosques have their door-keepers, whose business it is to light the lamps, sweep the floors, clean the mats, attend to the due supply of water in the fountains, and kick out all Christian dogs who may presume to enter: but it is no part of their duty to exclude the faithful at any time, whether they come for devotional purposes or not. In Mohammedan countries generally it is a common thing to see men, during the hours not appropriated to prayer, lounging, eating, or working in the mosques; such practices not being deemed inconsistent with the high respect which the Muslims pay to these buildings. Some mosques remain open all night, and many houseless persons sleep in them on the matting that covers the paved floor: the practice is often alluded to in the Arabian Nights. When Mr. Buckingham passed through the great mosque it was full of people; some assembled to smoke, some apparently to drive bargains of trade, but certainly none to pray. It was, indeed, a living picture of what we may believe the temple at Jerusalem to have become in our Lord's day, a place of public resort and thoroughfare, where men bought and sold.

Offensive as such practices appear to us, they proceed from no irreverent spirit on the part of the Muslims. We cannot too often repeat how necessary it is in reasoning about eastern matters to avoid rash inferences founded on our own ways of thinking and acting. This is a caution unhappily too often disregarded by travellers. Cast among a people whose language they do not understand, the idiom of whose thoughts differs widely from their own, they view everything through a false medium, and blunder at every step. Many of them may recognise their own type in Commodore Trunnion, that gallant seaman, who applied the rules of navigation to the management of his horse, and beat up channel to church by short tacks, by reason of want of sea-room.

Christians are much struck by the manner in which religious sentiments are mixed up with every act of a Mussulman's existence: upon the most trivial as well as the most solemn occasions in life his thoughts seem to begin and end with Providence. All his emotions find vent in the utterance of the name of Allah: he buys and sells with it, and addresses it to the very brutes in his service. The man who sells bread in the streets does not cry bread, but ejaculates *Allah kerim*, God is liberal: the water-seller cries *Allah djàwad*, God is generous, and so on. If a Bedouin's camel commit any unusual frolic he is rebuked with an *Allah rakhim*, or called back again to his place with *Inshallah*, may it please God! There is a story told of an Englishman who, speaking no language but his own, made the grand tour of Europe without an interpreter, relying only on a well-filled purse and the single French word *combien?* how much? A slight modification of the ingenious traveller's plan might carry a man with *éclat* over a great part of Asia. With a becoming gravity of demeanour, and a prudent use of two or three such universally significant expressions as Wullah, Yullah, and

Inshallah, a man might get on wonderfully well in the East, and even pass, perhaps, for a person of very decent conversational powers.

The frequent prayers and the constant ejaculation of the name of the Deity do not seem in the slightest degree to diminish the veneration for them. It is not the least singular part of Mohammedanism that in all moods and situations its disciples attend to the enjoined ceremonies with as cheerful a spirit as if they arose from the spontaneous feelings of their own hearts. For a Christian to invoke God's name at all times and for all purposes would be justly condemned as indicating a coarse and callous mind, to say the least of it; but though the Orientals do this, it is never lightly done, but with an astonishing degree of solemnity in the tone and manner, considering the frequency of the practice. The followers of Mohammed, says Dr. Richardson, pronounce the word Inshallah with more devotional fervour than any word I ever heard pronounced by any people in any language.

There are two Imaums to each of the larger mosques, one who reads the every-day prayers, and another who acts only on the Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath. These men have no spiritual authority, and are chosen promiscuously from among the tradespeople, or more generally from among the schoolmasters; they carry on their ordinary occupations in the intervals between their attendances at the mosques, and are changed or removed at the will of the congregation, and the most pious and strict Mussulman is usually chosen to fill the office.

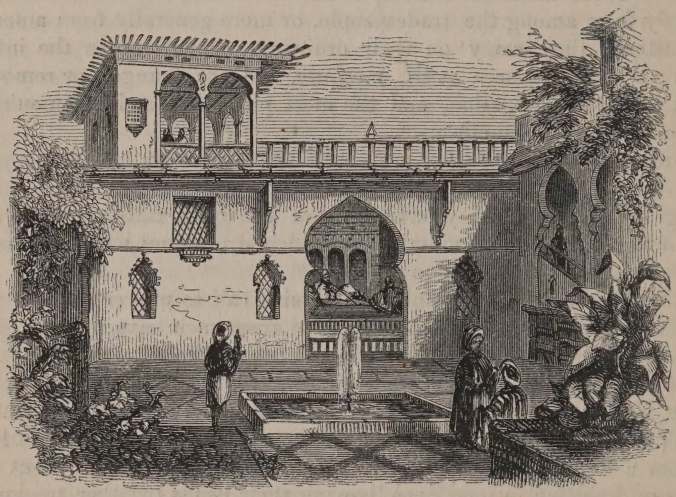
The muezzins, of whom there are sometimes more than one, are generally selected for the fine tone and power of their voices; they have rather a fatiguing occupation, as they have to chant the extra calls to prayer in the middle of the night; but in most of the principal mosques where this is done there is generally more than one muezzin.

Beautiful it is to hear the muezzin's evening call to prayer sounding clear from some neighbouring minaret. Some of these men have remarkably fine voices, and the long, liquid cry, *La illa illa Allah Mohammed re sul Allah*, when pitched in a high key, is most musical. The call is instantly obeyed by every Mussulman within hearing: the most languid voluptuary quits his luxurious couch without a pang, and prays with as much fervour as if he had risen from a hermit's cell; within the areas of the mosques devout forms may be seen kneeling in long lines, bowing their heads together towards the holy city; those that are in the gardens approach the banks of the stream, and plunge their bare arms into the water to purify themselves; you see them kneeling down under some tree, or along the edge of the highway; the soft, mellow, subdued light of a Syrian evening is gradually diffused over the landscape; the warm flush of the western horizon gleams at intervals through the spreading foliage; the rocky mountains are tinted with deep blue; the stillness of night is gathering round; and you gaze on groups of human beings kneeling on the ground in the attitude of prayer.

Again, when the long, melodious cry is heard in the silent watches of the night, and the solemn chant of "Prayer is better than sleep," comes thrilling on the ear through the open lattice, how novel and powerful are the emotions excited in the mind of the European stranger! All difference of creed is forgotten in such a moment; the pride of superior knowledge is abashed;

the listener's heart is filled with humble reverence for the one great Being whom all adore, and with thoughts of peace and good-will towards his fellow men; for he feels that in God all men are brothers, and that He who is infinitely beyond the reach of the wisest minds, scorns not the imperfect worship of the simplest of His creatures.

The entrance to some even of the finest houses is by a low mean-looking door in a great blank wall, little according with the luxury and splendour within, and seeming more likely to lead to a cow-shed than to a luxurious mansion. This unpromising entrance admits you through an outer court, occupied by the porter and some other domestics, into a spacious quadrangle paved with marble, in the middle of which a fountain throws up a continual shower, cooling the atmosphere, and refreshing the evergreens and flowering shrubs, which are placed around it. In one corner stands a tall slender pole like a signal-staff, for the purpose of hoisting up an earthen jar full of water, which is cooled by the evaporation that takes place through the porous sides of the vessel.* An arcade, supported by low slender columns,



Court yard of a House in Damascus.

runs round the quadrangle, giving admission to the lower apartments; these are elaborately painted and gilded, and the cornices are ornamented with Arabic inscriptions. Rich carpets and deewans, and cushions of damask or velvet, embroidered with gold, cover the floors, and china plates, jars, basins, and bowls, are advantageously disposed in niches in the walls, or on shelves. In one of these apartments the stranger is generally received on his first introduction, but the places of common reception are the arcades, one of which is furnished with a deewan, which is shifted as the sun comes round. Here, as the Turk reclines upon softest cushions, the mild air that fans his cheek, the delightful mellowing of the light by

* The fact may not be known to some of our readers, that a bottle of wine may be very effectually cooled by hanging it up *in the sun*, swathed in cloths constantly wetted with cold water.

the evergreens, the fragrance of the blossoms, and the plashing of the fountain, all weave round him a charm of the most voluptuous repose. Even here the same mysterious solitude prevails as in the streets; the sound of your own footsteps echoing over the marble pavement, seems to you a rude intrusion on the genius of the place; and you could almost fancy yourself in one of the enchanted palaces of the Arab romances.

A side passage from the outer court leads to the harem, which has a court appropriated to itself. All the courts and the open rooms are frequented by swallows and tame pigeons. Towards evening, the whole town is in a flutter with innumerable flights of the latter, on their return to roost: men stand in the neighbourhood of the city whistling the birds in, or waving white pennants attached to poles to lure them to alight, which, after many graceful sweeps round the decoy, they accomplish.

The fond attachment to the declining cause and to the ancient usages of Islamism, which, in the common people of Damascus, declares itself in acts of insolence and intolerance, appears among the wealthier and more polished classes chiefly in a certain antique sumptuousness, a more gorgeous profusion of "barbaric pearl and gold." The palaces of the Agas, the aristocracy of the city, surpass, in the splendour of their internal decorations, anything of the kind to be seen elsewhere in the empire, and seem to realise to our imagination the magnificence of the days of the caliphs, the Saladins, and the Solymans. Many of their divans are fitted up at a cost of as much as a hundred thousand piastres, and in some palaces there are as many as eight or ten of these lordly halls. One gorgeous apartment in the house of Ali Aga Kazini-el-Katabi cost the proprietor upwards of 200,000 piastres, more than £2000 sterling.

The ceiling was formed of a species of gold-carved tracery on a glass ground, producing a most splendid effect. The walls, a short distance below the ceiling, were gaily painted in the form of buildings, fantastic porticoes, and columns, through which, in the distance, were glimpses of the sea, and blue mountains, and here and there foregrounds of the weeping willow and the cypress, painted by artists from Stamboul. Below these were recesses with folding doors, richly inlaid with different coloured woods, and ornamented with light tracery and figure work. Around them were scroll patterns of clusters of arms and weapons, and portions of the walls on each side were richly inlaid with tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl.

The house of Mallim Yusseff, the Jew treasurer and secret director of

most of the affairs of the pashalic at the time of Mr. Buckingham's visit to the city, had been built by that minister's father, during the latter half of whose life, or about twenty-five years, there had been employed in its construction and embellishment at least fifty workmen of different descriptions, every day excepting holidays. The exterior of this mansion was even more than usually remarkable for poverty and meanness.

The agas are in general the sons or descendants of pashas, who have employed in the decoration of their dwellings the treasures amassed by their fathers. They are a numerous class, exhibiting under another form a counterpart to the nepotism of Rome; they fill the chief civil and military posts in the city under the pashas deputed by the sultan, and have vast territorial possessions in the villages surrounding Damascus. Their pomp consists in palaces, gardens, horses, and women; at a sign from the pasha their heads fall, and their wealth, their palaces, their gardens, their horses, and their women, are transferred to some new favourite of fortune. Such a system naturally invites to enjoyment of the present moment and to resignation; voluptuousness and fatalism are the necessary results of oriental despotism. In the year 1839 the wealthy Ali Aga, mentioned above, being detected in carrying on a clandestine correspondence with the Turkish seraskier, Hafiz Ali Pasha, the general acting against the forces of Mohammed Ali, an order followed for his execution. His headless body remained a whole day exposed in the bazaar. His death was much regretted, for he was a man of high birth, and respected by all classes.

CHAPTER XVI.

DAMASCUS CONTINUED.—THE PASHAS ASSAAD AND ABDALLAH-EL-SATIDGI—PROMENADES—FRANKS.

ASSAAD, who erected the noble edifice, described in the last chapter, was the last of four pashas, of the wealthy family of Eladin (a father and three brothers), who succeeded each other in the pashalic of Damascus, and held it for fifty years between them; he himself retained it for fifteen years, during which time he did an infinity of good. Some particulars of his history, and of that of his two next successors in office, are worth relating for their intrinsic interest, and for the light they cast on eastern manners and Turkish policy.

Those were happy times for the peasants, in which Assaad ruled over them, for he maintained such strict discipline among his soldiers, that the poor fellah was secure from their brutal violence and extortions. His passion, like that of all men in office throughout the Turkish empire, was to amass money; but he did not let it remain idle in his coffers, and with a moderation unheard of in that country, he required no more interest for it than six per cent. An anecdote is related of him which will give an idea of his character. Being one day in want of money, he was advised by the informers, by whom the pashas are always surrounded, to levy a contribution

on the Christians, and on the manufacturers of stuffs. "How much do you think that may produce?" said Assaad. "Fifty or sixty purses," they replied. "But," he rejoined, "these people are by no means rich, how will they raise that sum?" "My lord, they will sell their wives' jewels; and, besides, they are Christian dogs." "I will show you," said the pasha, "that I am an abler extortioner than you." The same day he sent an order to the mufti to wait on him secretly, and at night. As soon as the mufti arrived, Assaad told him he was informed that he (the mufti) had long led a very irregular life in private; that he, though the head of the law, had indulged himself in drinking wine and eating pork, contrary to the precepts of the excellent book: assuring him at the same time, that he was determined to inform against him to the Mufti of Stamboul, but that he wished to give him timely notice, that he might not reproach him with perfidiousness. The mufti, terrified at this menace, implored him to forego his purpose; and as such offers are an open and allowed traffic among the Turks, he promised the pasha a present of a thousand piastres. The pasha rejected the offer; the mufti doubled and trebled the sum, till at length they agreed for six thousand piastres, with the reciprocal engagement to observe a profound silence. The next day Assaad sends for the cadi, and addresses him in the same manner; tells him he is informed of several flagrant abuses in his administration, and that he is no stranger to a certain affair which may perhaps cost him his head. The cadi, frightened out of his wits, supplicates for clemency, negotiates like the mufti, accommodates the matter for a like sum, and retires, congratulating himself that he has escaped even at that price. The pasha proceeded in the same manner with the Walee, the Nakeeb, the Aga of the Janissaries, the Mohteseb; and after them, with the wealthiest Turkish and Christian merchants; each of these, charged with offences peculiar to their several situations, and above all accused of intrigues, were anxious to purchase pardon by contributions. When the sum total was collected, the pasha again calling his intimate counsellors round him, addressed them thus: "Have you heard it reported in Damascus that Assaad has been guilty of extortion?" "No, my lord." "By what means, then, have I come by the two hundred purses I now show you?" The informers began to cry out in great admiration, and to inquire what method his highness had employed. "I have fleeced the rams," he replied, "and not skinned the lambs and the kids."

After a reign of fifteen years, the people of Damascus were deprived of this man by intrigues, the history of which is thus recounted. About the year 1755, one of the black eunuchs of the seraglio, making the pilgrimage of Mecca, took up his quarters with Assaad; but dissatisfied with the simple hospitality with which he was entertained, he would not return by Damascus, but took the road to Gaza. Hussein Pasha, who was then governor of that town, took care to entertain him sumptuously. The eunuch, on his return to Constantinople, did not forget the treatment he had received from his two hosts, and to show at once his gratitude and his resentment, he determined to ruin Assaad and raise Hussein to his dignity. His intrigues were so successful, that in the year 1756 Jerusalem was detached from the government of Damascus and bestowed upon Hussein, under the title of a pashalic; and the following year he obtained that of Damascus. Assaad, thus deposed,

retired with his household into the Desert to avoid still greater disgrace. The time of the caravan arrived: Hussein conducted it, agreeably with the duty of his station; but having quarrelled with the Arabs concerning some payment they demanded, they attacked him, defeated his escort, and entirely plundered the caravan, in 1757. On the news of this disaster, the whole empire was thrown into as much confusion as could have been occasioned by the loss of the most important battle. The families of twenty thousand pilgrims, who had perished with thirst and hunger, or been slain by the Arabs; the relations of a multitude of women who had been carried into slavery; the merchants interested in the plundered caravan, all demanded vengeance on the cowardice of the Emir Hadj, and the sacrilege of the Bedouins. The Porte, alarmed, at first proscribed the head of Hussein, but he concealed himself so well, that it was impossible to surprise him; while he, from his retreat, acting in concert with the eunuch his protector, undertook to exculpate himself. In this he succeeded after three months, by producing a real or fictitious letter of Assaad, by which it appeared that the ex-pasha, to revenge himself on Hussein, had excited the Arabs to attack the caravan. The proscription was now turned against Assaad, and nothing remained to be sought but an opportunity to carry it into execution.

The pashalic, however, remained vacant. Hussein, disgraced as he was, could not resume his government. The Porte, desiring to revenge the late affront, and to provide for the safety of the pilgrims in future, made choice of a singular man, whose character and history deserve to be noticed. This man, named Abdallah-el-Satadgi, was born near Bagdad, in an obscure rank of life. Entering very young into the service of the pasha, he had passed his early years in camps and war, and had been present as a common soldier in all the campaigns of the Turks against the famous Shah-Thamas-Kouli-Kan, and the bravery and abilities he displayed raised him, step by step, even to the dignity of pasha of Bagdad. Advanced to this eminent post, he conducted himself with so much firmness and prudence, that he restored peace to the country from both foreign and domestic wars. The simple life of the soldier, which he continued to lead, requiring no great supplies of money, he amassed none; but the great officers of the Seraglio of Constantinople, who derived no profits for his moderation, did not approve of this disinterestedness, and waited only for a pretext to remove him.

This they soon found. Abdallah had kept back the sum of 4000*l.*, arising from the estate of a merchant. Scarcely had the pasha received it, before it was demanded of him. In vain did he represent that he had used it to pay some old arrears due to his troops; in vain did he request time; the Vizier only pressed him the more closely; and, on a second refusal, despatched a black eunuch, secretly provided with a khat-sherif, to take off his head. The eunuch arriving in Bagdad feigned himself a sick person, travelling for the benefit of his health; and, as such, sent his respects to the pasha, observing the usual forms of politeness, and requesting permission to pay him a visit. Abdallah, well acquainted with the practices of the divan, was distrustful of so much complaisance, and suspected some secret mischief. His treasurer, not less versed in such plots, and greatly attached to his person, confirmed him in his suspicions, and proposed, in order to come at the truth, to go and search the eunuch's baggage, while he and his retinue should be paying their

visit to the pasha. Abdallah approved of the expedient, and at the hour appointed, the treasurer repaired to the tent of the eunuch, and made so careful a search that he found the khat-sherif concealed within the lining of a pelisse. Immediately he flew to the pasha, and sending for him into an adjoining room, he told him what he had discovered.* Abdallah furnished with the fatal writing, hid it in his bosom, and returned to the apartment; when, resuming, with an air of the greatest indifference, his conversation with the eunuch, "The more I think of it," said he, "O Khowaga, the more I am astonished at your journey into this country; Bagdad is so far from Stamboul, and we can boast so little of our air, that I can scarcely believe you have come hither for no other purpose than the re-establishment of your health." "It is true," replied the aga; "I am also commissioned to demand of you something on account of the 4000*l.* you received." "We will say nothing of that," answered the pasha; "but come," he added, in a determined tone, "confess that you have likewise orders to bring with you my head. Observe what I say, you know my character, and you know my word may be depended on: I now assure you, that if you make an open declaration of the truth, you shall depart without the least injury." The eunuch now began a long defence, protesting that he came with no such black intentions. "*By my head*," said Abdallah, "confess to me the truth:" the eunuch still denied. "*By your head:*" he still denied. "Take care! *By the head of the Sultan:*" he still persisted. "Be it so," said Abdallah, "the matter is decided; thou hast pronounced thy own doom;" and drawing forth the khat-sherif—"know you this paper? Thus you govern at Constantinople! Yes, you are a gang of villains, who sport with the lives of whoever happen to displease you, and shed, without remorse, the blood of the Sultan's servants. The Vizier must have heads; he shall have one; off with the head of that dog, and send it to Constantinople." The order was executed on the spot, and the eunuch's retinue were ordered to depart with their master's head.

After this decisive stroke Abdallah might have availed himself of his popularity to revolt; but he chose rather to retire among the Koords. Here the pardon of the Sultan was sent him, and a firman appointing him pasha of Damascus. Wearied of his exile and destitute of money, he accepted the commission, and set out with one hundred men who adhered to his fortunes. On his arrival on the frontiers of his new government he learned that Assaad was encamped in the neighbourhood: he had heard him spoken of as the greatest man in Syria, and was desirous of seeing him. He therefore disguised himself, and accompanied only by six horsemen, repaired to his camp and demanded to speak with him. He was introduced, as is usual in these camps, without much ceremony; and after the usual salutations, Assaad inquired of him whence he came and whither he was going. Abdallah replied he was one of six or seven Koord horsemen who were seeking employment, and who, hearing that Satadgi was appointed pasha of Damascus, were going to apply to him; but being informed on their way that Assaad was encamped in the neighbourhood, they had come to request

* "I have these facts," says Volney, "from a person who was intimate with this treasurer, and had seen Abdallah at Jerusalem."

of him provisions for themselves and their horses. "With pleasure," replied Assaad; "but do you know Satadgi?" "Yes." "What sort of a man is he? Is he fond of money?" "No; Satadgi cares very little for money or pelisses, or shawls or pearls, or women; he is fond of nothing but well-tempered arms, good horses, and war. He does justice, protects the widow and the orphan, reads the Koran, and lives on butter and milk." "Is he old?" said Assaad. "Fatigue has made him appear older than he is: he is covered with wounds; he has received a sabre cut which has made him lame of his left leg, and another which makes him lean his head on his right shoulder. In short," said he, starting abruptly to his feet, "he is in shape and features exactly my picture." At these words Assaad turned pale and gave himself up for lost; but Abdallah sitting down again, said to him, "Brother, fear nothing; I am not sent by a troop of banditti; I come not to betray thee; on the contrary, if I can render thee any service command me; for we are both held in the same estimation by our masters; they have recalled me because they wish to chastise the Bedouins; when they have gratified their revenge on them, they will again lay plots to deprive me of my head. *God is great; what he has decreed will come to pass.*"

With these sentiments Abdallah repaired to Damascus, where he restored good order, put an end to the extortions of the soldiery, and conducted the caravan, sabre in hand, without paying a piastre to the Arabs. During his administration, which lasted two years, the country enjoyed the most perfect tranquillity. The inhabitants of Damascus long remembered him with gratitude, saying that under his government they slept in security with open doors. He himself, frequently disguised as one of the poorest of the people, saw everything with his own eyes. The summary justice he sometimes inflicted, in consequence of his discoveries under these disguises, produced a salutary effect, and was long a favourite theme of conversation among the people. It is said, for example, that being on his circuit at Jerusalem, he had prohibited his soldiers from either taking anything or imposing any order without paying. One day, when he was going about in the disguise of a poor man with a little plate of lentils in his hand, a soldier, who had a faggot on his shoulders, insisted on his carrying it. After some resistance Abdallah took it on his back, whilst the soldier, following him, drove him forward with oaths and curses. Another soldier, happening to recognise the pasha, made a sign to his comrade, who instantly took to his heels and escaped through the cross streets. After proceeding a few paces, Abdallah no longer hearing his man, turned round, and vexed at missing his aim, threw his burden on the ground, exclaiming, "The rascally knavish dog! he has both robbed me of my hire, and carried off my plate of lentils." But the soldier did not long escape; for a few days afterwards the pasha again surprising him in the act of robbing a poor woman's garden and ill treating her, ordered his head to be struck off on the spot.

As for himself he was unable to ward off the destiny he had foreseen. After escaping several times from hired assassins, he was poisoned by his nephew. This he discovered before he died; and sending for his murderer, "Wretch that thou art," said he, "the villains have seduced thee; thou hast poisoned me to profit by my spoils: it is in my power, before I die, to

blast thy hopes and punish thy ingratitude; but I know the Turks; they will be my avengers." In fact, Satadgi had scarcely breathed his last before a Capidji produced an order to strangle the nephew.

The promenades outside the walls afford the traveller agreeable and varied entertainment. Very tolerable horses, with gay saddles and crimson housings, are to be procured for hire, and the rides in the lovely evenings, about the different parts of the environs, present beautiful points of view, and most interesting snatches of Oriental life. As the sun is declining in the west, you see little caravans of dromedaries, or a few mules, slowly emerging from the gloomy gateways of the town, to gain a few hours' march to some neighbouring village, in order to commence their journey in earnest at an early hour on the morrow. From your horse you see over the mud-walls, that impede the view of the foot passenger, into the gardens, where donkeys with paniers are receiving their loads of enormous radishes, gourds, water-melons, grapes, pomegranates, and other produce. By the side of the donkeys stands a grim figure, with one eye, and with a long white stick in his hand, pointed with iron, at the first movement of which the donkeys start off headlong with their load of vegetables, clearing away right and left, and upsetting all who are heedless enough to await their onset.

Here and there you meet a string of dromedaries, some weary mookres, and a party of way-worn travellers, exhausted by the heat of the sun, and parched with thirst: a woman, perhaps, with a young child screaming with thirst, is nodding in a tackterawan, fastened on the hump of a dromedary. They have made a long journey, as you may guess by their jaded looks, and by the rapturous eagerness with which they pull up at the first flowing stream they meet. There goes the Aga or Sheikh of some neighbouring village, who has been to town to pay his contribution into the coffers of the governor, or to order himself a new scarlet robe. He makes a very gay figure on his Arab charger, accompanied by attendants with long white sticks, who run on either side of his horse's head. If you wander far enough you may fall in with some great encampment, the Bagdad caravan, for instance, three of which go annually from Damascus, and take from thirty to forty days on the journey each way. The line of camels, several thousands in number, extends to the verge of the horizon; tents are pitched, the merchandise unladen, and guards set to watch it. Innumerable fires glitter in every direction, and round them are groups of wild figures eating their frugal meal, or stretched on the ground to sleep.

On Friday, the Mohammedan sabbath, after mid-day prayers, the Mussulman population throng the gardens that constitute their paradise. "Nor, indeed," says a quaint old writer, "doth a Turk at any time show himself to be so truly pleased and satisfied in his senses, as he doth in the summer time, when he is in a pleasant garden. For he is no sooner come into it (if it be his own, or where he thinks he may be bold) than he puts off his upper coat and lays it aside, and on that his *turbant;* then turns up his sleeves, and unbuttoneth himself, turning his breast to the wind, if there be any, if not, he fans himself, or his servant doth it for him. Again, sometimes standing upon a high bank, to take the fresh air, holding his arms abroad (as a cormorant, sitting on a rock, doth his wings, in sunshine, after a storm), courting the weather

and sweet air, calling it his soul, his life, and his delight; ever and anon shewing some visible signs of contentment. Nor shall the garden, during his pleasant distraction, be termed otherwise than *Paradise;* with whose flowers he stuffs his bosom, and decketh his turbant, shaking his head at their sweet savour. Sometimes he singeth a song to some pretty flower, by whose name his mistress is called; and uttering words of as great joy as if, at that instant, she herself were there present. And one bit of meat in a garden shall do him more good than the best fare that may be elsewhere*."

If you go out on Friday at the principal gate, you will make one in a most rare motley crowd. A line of women, enveloped in white sheets, file slowly towards the burial ground, like phantoms returning to the tombs; their faces hidden with dark-coloured handkerchiefs, or so shrouded within the folds of their linen-coverings, that not a feature is to be seen. They seem all of the same dimensions, and move with the same gait; their feet in yellow boots just appear below the white drapery, and give them the air, as they waddle along, of gigantic ducks. Mountebanks and musicians throw themselves in the way; the former tumbling and grimacing before every fresh party that comes from the gate; and the latter shrieking and drumming in their ears till they receive a few paras for their pains. A perpetual clinking of brass cups announces where cool water is to be bought; and bread and fruit are cried for sale in the name of the prophet, loud enough to be heard above all the other noises. Turks in pink, white, and sky-blue dresses, that flaunt in the wind as they gallop, prance upon horses burthened with their finery, their attendants carrying djerids beside them; while more sober figures, upon white asses or mules, move deliberately along with their amber-mouthed pipes at their lips.

The women, seated at the graves of their kindred, indulge their woe either in loud and clamorous wailings, or in more expressive silence. At the head of every grave is a pot sunk in the earth for receiving flowers; and few of these are left unfilled.

Arab Women in a Cemetery.

A little beyond the gate there is a clear space of about two hundred feet long, where the Turks practise the djerid; above it, at one end, is a heap of earth that has grown into a little hill; at the foot of which trickles a small brook, detached from the river, for the purpose of irrigating the patches of barley, where stand a few poplars and walnut-trees. The Barrada runs with great swiftness at the termination of this scene. On its

* From a little old book, by one Mr. Robert Withers, published in 1650, and entitled "A Description of the Grand Signor's Seraglio."

banks are many grave parties seated with their pipes in their mouths on the rich carpets they have carried out to repose on; while the Turks are galloping their horses about till they can hardly stand. The women sit upon the hillock admiring the cavaliers; for the women in Damascus, though they may not be seen, have ample privilege to see. When Jewish or Christian women join this scene, they generally sit apart, resting against the trunk of a tree, or grouped in the most retired corner of the river's brink. They chat and smoke sometimes with their veils removed; and if the traveller have the good fortune to come upon them in one of these unguarded moments, he will be enraptured with the sight of the most beautiful countenances he ever beheld.

The women of Damascus are esteemed the handsomest in the East; and, though the fame of their charms has no doubt been much enhanced by the difficulty of seeing them, they sometimes, from behind their tantalizing clouds, pour forth a light that might dazzle the most discreet beholder. There is a very graceful style of coquetry in the manner in which an Eastern belle displays her arms, which are the roundest and most perfect imaginable. The fingers, covered with rings, and dyed pink under the nails, play about the folds of the drapery, as if anxious to restore it to its place, in which, some how or another, they can never succeed, when there is a sly opportunity of disclosing the beauty it is meant to conceal. Large blue eyes are common among the Christian women, some of whom are exceedingly fair; and there is a grace in the turban beyond all the arts of a civilized toilette.

This is the favourite resort about Damascus; some parties saunter through the narrow lanes, however, or seek the greater retirement of more cultivated spots; and private parties are made to the country-houses scattered through the gardens, and to those of the beautiful village of Salahiéh, at the foot of the mountain of the same name. Some of these houses can be hired of the proprietors for the day. Coffee is made wherever any number of people is collected; and men, with pipes to hire, stand by the side of the numerous streamlets, ready to fill the bowls with water for each new smoker. In the greatest thoroughfares are crowds of beggars, invoking blessings on the charitable; and jugglers endeavouring by their tricks and activity to intercept the gift that seems intended for them.

It is said that if alms be regularly bestowed for some time, the person receiving them acquires the right of claiming the continuance of the charity, and that decisions of this kind have been made by the Muslim tribunals. An instance to this purpose was given Dr. Russell by the Mufti of Aleppo, in answer to a question how far a person could be obliged to continue a pension he had for some time given voluntarily.

The mufti, in his way to a certain mosque which he used to frequent every Friday, observed, among the other beggars, a very old infirm blind man; and, compelled by a sudden impulse of compassion, he bestowed on the old man a small silver coin, instead of the copper coin he usually gave to the others. The pension was continued weekly for above two years, during which time the mufti often wondered within himself, how the old man came to hold out so long; and he ingenuously confessed, that he had now and then been disposed to repent having exceeded the ordinary bounds of his charity, though

he had not resolution sufficient to assert the power of retrenching it. At length he perceived one day, that another beggar had taken possession of his pensioner's post; a person not only younger by several years, but who retained the sight of one eye. "I could not," said the mufti, "help feeling some concern at first for the loss of my old friend, whom I conceived to be dead, but I soon consoled myself with the reflection of being now able, at equal expense, to gratify several supplicants instead of one. Upon presenting a copper coin to the new beggar, I was surprised to find him seize my rein and insist on stopping my horse, in spite of all that I or my pages could say. 'Pray, friend,' said I, 'what means all this violence?'—'Look ye, sir (replied the beggar), God is just! I have hired this station of the blind sheikh who is unable to come any more abroad; we reckoned you fairly at one silver para, and by Allah! you shall pay me.'—'It was in vain (concluded the mufti) that I urged the disadvantage on his side of possessing one eye, and being a younger man than the sheik; the most I could obtain was a kind of half promise that when he should come to be disabled, he would not sell me to his successor."

A Santon, or Religious Beggar.

The presence of a Western stranger in his Frank garb rather improves such scenes as those above described, by the force of contrast, and sometimes imparts to them a character of fun that is by no means amiss, as witness the gallant and lamented Major Skinner, who says:—

"It is only six months since a European has been able with safety to appear in his own costume, and very few have yet been here to display it. I am, to many, therefore, a most singular exhibition. I appear so mean a figure in comparison with the flowing robes about me, that I am miserably out of conceit with my wardrobe, and have no occasion to be flattered with the notice I have attracted. The Turkish women mutter 'God is merciful!' as I pass them, and seem to call for protection from my ill-omened aspect; the Christian women laugh aloud and chatter with their sweet voices comments far from favourable to my appearance. As I walked in front of a group of these merry dames, I drew my handkerchief from my coat pocket, and, naturally enough, applied it to wipe the dust from my eyes. I was assailed by such a shout of laughter that I thought I had committed some frightful indiscretion. I stood in great perplexity with my handkerchief in my hand, evidently an object of intense interest, for many women came shuffling from a distance to see the show. This was at length ended by my returning the cause of all the amusement to its place; when, forgetting their propriety, they clapped their hands, and laughed with double enjoyment.

"It is not a difficult matter to become the wonder of a city, and as yet, unconscious of the way in which I had merited to be one, I followed the crowd, as the evening approached, towards the convent. When we had entered the gate, a little boy, struck by the singular shape of a round hat which I wore, clapped his hands and cried out, 'Abu-tanjier! Abu-tanjier!' 'The father of a cooking-pot! look at the father of a cooking-pot!' This was echoed from every side; for the resemblance a hat bears to a common cooking vessel, with a rim to it, is too strong to escape, and I was pursued by the shouts of the people till I was nearly out of sight.

"A woman who had heard the uproar came to her door, and, as I had outwalked the crowd, she could not resist the chance of gratifying her curiosity, and begged me to show her my hat. I took it off with great gravity, and put it into her hands; I believe she was disappointed to find that it was not a cooking-pot in reality. I rescued it from her in time to save it, or it might have been lodged in one of the colleges as a perpetual puzzle to the learned of the city."

On the following Sunday, our traveller strolled up and down the pavement in front of the convent church as the congregation was coming out; he was soon surrounded by a group of women, among whom were some of the merry ones whose laughter had been so excited by the management of his pocket-handkerchief. They requested him, by very intelligible signs, to play the scene over again; and on his complying, so many fair hands were thrust into his coat pockets, that he struggled with difficulty to escape, lest his clothes should be torn to pieces, and distributed throughout the city as relics of some extraordinary monster.

After all, he had no great reason to complain of his fate; for, as we have already seen, he might have met with worse usage than merely being laughed at. The Damascene Muslims have long had the reputation of being pre-eminent for fanaticism and intolerance. The Turks themselves say of them that they are the most mischievous race in the whole empire (but that probably means no more than that they are the most sturdy in resisting Turkish tyranny), and the Arabs, who delight in jingling proverbs, say *Shami, shoumi*—Damascene rascal; just as they say, *Halabi tchelebi*, Aleppine *petit-maître*. Though we may question the truth of this wise saw, there is no doubt that the sequestered position of the city, and the pride inspired by its superior sanctity, have not contributed to render the inhabitants very tolerant towards outlandish giaours. They bear with European monks, because they are used to their dress, and look upon them as Orientals: but, previously to the Egyptian invasion, no Christian dared to show himself within the gates in the Frank habit, nor was he allowed to mount a horse, but was compelled to content himself with the humble jackass, and even to think himself fortunate if he was not compelled, by insults, to dismount, and lead his donkey by the bridle, when passing through the bazaars, whilst every Mussulman thought himself privileged to kick the infidel out of his way. When Ibrahim Pasha first entered Damascus, he was earnestly entreated not to suffer the Christian dogs to ride on horses, whence they might look down on the true believers and "blacken their faces." "Oh," said the conqueror, "there is an easy remedy for that.

If the Christians ride on horses, do you ride on dromedaries, and then you know you will be above them."

It is not surprising that a Frank dressed in his own habit, previously so rare an object in Damascus, should create a great sensation, for a being more totally different in all outward appearances from the natives could hardly fall among them. In manner, in figure, in the mode of walking and of sitting down, who can be more opposite than an European and an Oriental? A whimsical incident, that occurred shortly after the establishment of the British consulate in Damascus, puts this matter in a striking light. Mrs. Farren, the lady of our consul-general, shortly after her arrival, rode with her husband from their residence at Salahieh to the city, dressed in a handsome blue English riding-habit, velvet cap, &c., and mounted on a fine Arab mare. The guard at the gate had received orders to present arms to the British consul: seeing the party coming, they turned out, and allowed Mr. Farren, who rode first, to pass without taking any notice of him; but when Mrs. Farren came up, in her long flowing dress, velvet cap, and gold band, much the more imposing figure of the two, the whole guard, taking her to be the consul-general, forthwith presented arms.

When the Earl and Countess of Belmore visited Damascus, they and their suite wore the Mameluke dress: and as it is an unheard-of thing in Mohammedan countries for ladies to walk arm-in-arm with gentlemen in the

Egyptian Costumes.

public streets, her ladyship thought it advisable to appear in male attire. The curiosity manifested by the party in looking at everything soon discovered them to be Europeans, and the Albanian soldier that attended them was immediately asked, "Who is that? who is that?" Instead of replying "He is an English nobleman," or prince, as the word would probably have

been rendered, he cautiously said, with affected carelessness, "Oh! he is an English consul;" a character to which the inquirers were not unaccustomed. This immediately satisfied their curiosity as to Lord Belmore; but observing his attentions to her ladyship, they next inquired, "Who is that with him?" "That," replied the sly Albanian gravely, "is his clerk;" which passed off remarkably well, though it did not put a stop to the queries; for looking a little more narrowly, they asked again, "How comes it that the consul's clerk has no beard? He seems to be old enough, too, to have one." This was a poser; but the respondent extricated himself from the difficulty by saying, "He did not know; it had not happened to grow. There were sometimes odd cases of that kind;" and the philosophic Turk immediately solved the puzzle by remarking, "Inshallah! it is the will of God: we know nothing about these things!" and here the conversation dropped.

CHAPTER XVII.

Palmyra.

An excursion to the wondrous remains of Tadmor in the Wilderness had long been among our most favourite projects; but now, when we might have thought ourselves on the point of realising it, we found its seeming practicability daily dwindle away. In Damascus we heard of nothing on all hands but the difficulties and dangers of the journey through the wild domain of the marauding Bedouins; and were told, that, if we ventured on it, we must make up our minds to be plundered in one way or another—that is to say, either in the regular "stand-and-deliver" fashion of the Desert, or by the extortion of the Sheikh, whose protection we should be compelled to purchase. All this was, of course, very annoying to us, and we spent many an hour together, discussing our hopes and chances, and reading over and over again some pages relating to the object of our longing desires, written by preceding travellers, who had been more fortunate than ourselves. One day we were occupied as usual in this way, and the following passage from B. Poujoulat's "Asie Mineure" was the subject of our study:—

"Four hours after we had quitted the camp of Mehzied we saw six horsemen advancing towards us at full gallop: 'Here come our enemies,' cried our escort; 'do not stir from the spot; we will return to you; we will go and give them battle.' And away they went like the wind shouting their war-cry; and a more horrible screech than the Bedouin war-cry no one need desire to hear. They had disappeared in an instant, and nothing met our eyes but the vast and silent waste. M. B. and I seized our pistols, determined to let fly at the first robber that should assail us: our dragoman and our moukre bewailed their fate with scalding tears, and reproached us beforehand with having caused their death. 'Why did we ever come into this infernal desert?' cried Ibrahim, sobbing; 'I warned you over and over again that these Bedouins are the greatest brigands in the world; they will kill us all.' After suffering an hour's suspense we saw one of our

Bedouins returning to us. He told us that one of his party had been taken prisoner, that his horse had been captured, and that Achmed, Mehzied's son, had received a thrust of a lance in the left side.

"'But you don't mean to tell me that we shall not go to Tadmor?' said I to the Arab.

"'Mehzied has sworn to you that you shall go to Tadmor,' he replied, 'though we should, every man of us, die to protect you. Come, let us join the rest of the troop; they are waiting for us at the foot of yonder hillock.'

"We proceeded to the spot, and there we found four of our guards grouped round Achmed, who seemed labouring under great pain and prostration of strength. I asked him to show me his wound; he uncovered his breast very tenderly, and I saw on his left side—a wound, certainly, but one that was neither recent nor bloody. That was enough. I saw that the whole affair was only a trick to swindle us out of some piastres, and, indeed, before I had done inspecting Achmed's wound, one of our Bedouins, named Selim, said to me,—

"'The mare they took from us is of noble blood; her limbs are more slender than the gazelle's, and her steps outstrip the speed of death. Such a mare were cheap at forty purses (£200); you are too generous, young man, to let us endure so great a loss.'

"'We will talk about this at Homs, O Selim,' I replied, springing into the saddle: 'at present let us on to Tadmor.'

"Such is a specimen of the tricks played on Europeans by the Bedouins in the Desert. The six horsemen who had made a feint of attacking us had been sent by Mehzied. Not being able to rob us openly, because they had made themselves responsible for us with their lives, they had recourse to all sorts of stratagems to cheat us of what they could. Yet, these very men, though capable of such rascality, would deem it an offence to their dignity, were money offered them in return for food obtained under their tents. Such is the character of the Arabs of the Desert, a medley of cunning, thievish rapacity and chivalric generosity. The roving Arab will strip the traveller on the highway without mercy, and leave him to perish of hunger and thirst; and he will welcome him beneath his tent in the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful!"

A Bedouin.

We had got thus far in our reading when the door opened, and in walked Mr. Farren's showy and handsome dragoman, accompanied by a Bedouin sheikh, with whom our good friend had made preliminary arrangements on our behalf. The business was soon settled, the sum we were to pay, and the time and manner of our journey fixed, and the whole proceeding was

closed by a very animated harangue by the dragoman, wherein he impressed on the sheikh's mind the care he was totake of us; and told him how, that, quick as lightning, terrible as the thunderbolt, with several other oriental similes and expressions, would be the punishment on his devoted head and that of his followers if any harm came to us, every sentence being enforced by a loud clap of the hands at the end of it. The sheikh all the while sat composedly on the ground, leaning with his back against the wall, looking very patient and submissive, and only ejaculating every now and then *taieeb! taieeb!* "very well, very well."

Bedouins and their Camels.

Oct. 24th. At three o'clock in the afternoon we found the caravan assembled outside the gate and ready for departure; and in no long time afterwards we were all mounted. This mounting, however, was no easy business, for many of us had never before bestrode a dromedary. The dromedaries were made to kneel down, the Bedouins pressing all the time with their whole weight on the animal's legs, and uttering a continued sound like *crr, crr, crr:* they recommended us to be quick in securing ourselves in our seats, and to hold fast to the saddle before and behind, as unless great care is taken when the huge animal springs up with his fore legs he will inevitably tumble you over his rump; and should you escape this accident you have the same chance of being pitched over his head when he afterwards brings his hind legs erect. It was wonderful to see the agility of the Arabs in leaping on to the dromedaries; they merely placed the ball of the foot upon the projecting bone of the dromedary's hind leg, and leaped on to his back as he was walking. They sat with their legs doubled under them, as they would upon a divan; two or three perching themselves on the back of the same animal.

Our first day's journey was of three hours only, and at night we arrived at a small village on the outskirts of the cultivated land that surrounds Damascus. At sunrise next morning we departed, and now we were fairly launched on the great waste. We began our expedition with an accident

that took some time to repair. The camel on which a fat Maltese servant was seated was a little too lively for him, and setting off at a tremendous pace jolted him about from its hump to the boxes on each side so roughly that I thought he would have been shaken to pieces: at length off he pitched, and the freed animal galloped away with the most ludicrous capers till it got thoroughly rid of its load. The Arabs laughed very heartily at this little frisk, and would not return to assist the fallen rider. "No one," they all cried, "is ever hurt by falling from a camel;" but the poor Maltese had formed a very different opinion, and lay on the ground calling loudly for assistance: our camels, inspired by the same good humour as his, pulled at such a rate that we could not stop them, and some minutes had passed before we could render proper help. The man thought he had broken his arm. When we halted that night, all the idle Arabs came to the consultation, and had some difficulty to persuade him that his bones were whole. One of them undertook to cure the hurt in an instant, and digging a hole in the ground filled it with hot ashes, and desired the patient to stretch his arm across it; he complied with this advice, when two Arabs pressed and pulled it till it was perfectly straight, then exclaiming, "Inshallah!" in the name of God! suddenly heaped a quantity of hot charcoal upon it, and allowing the patient to jump up, pronounced it a cure, and if not, why then they were ready to repeat the operation: this single specimen of skill, however, seemed satisfactory enough.*

In the course of the day we crossed a chain of barren mountains which runs towards Palmyra, and after nine hours' march over a wild, uninhabited country, we arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon at the village of Nebk, surrounded by a few green trees and scanty gardens. We stopped at the house of the sheikh of the village, and shortly after our arrival visitors from all quarters made their appearance to gaze with astonishment at the novel sight of Franks in Frank dresses.

It was a lovely starlight evening; and we lit our pipes and walked on the terrace. I happened to have brought with me from England a large box of the latest improved phosphoric matches, consisting of a small wax taper, with a glass tube containing the acid which ignites the phosphorus. When the Arabs came round poking and peeping at my dress in the dark, I suddenly popped one of the matches into my mouth, bit the glass tube asunder, and immediately the bright light showed all our faces, white, swarthy, and black, in the most curious and striking contrast. The Arabs shouted and screamed with astonishment; they called to their companions above and below, and some stretched out their hands to take the little wax taper, which was still burning brightly, and they handed it round from one to the other petrified with astonishment. Some rushed down to communicate the news to their distant friends, and in a short time the whole village was in greater commotion than on our first arrival. They clamorously called for a repetition of the miracle; and all the remaining time we spent in the village, I was constantly pestered for some of the magic candles. One man had got a wife who would die of disappointment unless she obtained one; another wanted to take one and show it to his old father; and a third wanted to know at what price I would consent to part with only one.†

* Skinner. † Addison.

Next morning, October 26th, under-way again at six o'clock. There is so strong a resemblance to a voyage at sea in the passage across the Desert that I cannot divest myself of the belief that the moving mass is but a collection of small vessels carried into a heap by the tide. Every man is ready with his stick to fend off the animal that approaches him; they move away, as if quite unconscious of the circumstance, till another moment swings them together again.

The drivers are the poorest and lowest of the tribe, and exercise the sticks they carry with very little ceremony. For example, I was in the act of drinking water with the flask applied to my lips, when my camel receiving a blow for going where he should not turned suddenly round, and I came in a sitting posture on the ground amid the laughter of all in my part of the caravan. I contrived to bear the fall, and without having moved my flask continued to drink. I received an Arab cheer for this feat, and when I had remounted several came to congratulate me on the ingenious manner of my fall. One Arab, who had travelled a great deal in Syria, and had seen many Franks, assured me, I was more fit to be an Arab than any he had ever met, for Franks were all excessively awkward and disconcerted when they fell. I do not mean either to take much merit to myself for this act of agility, or to recommend it to the practice of travellers; but it has positively gained me more good-will from my wild companions than the most sedate demeanour could have done.

Our march this day lay through a wide plain, bordered on each side by a bold range of picturesque mountains; the soil was good and covered with long dry grass and camel's thorn; it appeared only to require water to be capable of producing anything. The ride was very monotonous, not a living being besides ourselves was in sight the whole day, and the same unvaried plain extended round us until sunset. The two sheikhs (the sheikh of Nebk had joined our escort), who were mounted on swift dromedaries, always rode some distance ahead of the party, and at midday marked the spot for halting by sticking their lances upright in the ground. Towards dusk we perceived the fires of a Bedouin encampment, which our escort soon recognised as that of their own tribe: they uttered a shout of joy, the dromedaries trotted down the declivity, and in an instant we pulled up at the door of the first tent; it was the sheikh's who was already dismounted, and at the door of the tent ready to bid us welcome with Bedouin hospitality. The sheikh's tent is always placed foremost in that direction from which strangers may be expected, because to him especially it belongs to receive them whether they come as friends or foes.

Our arrival took place just at that time in the evening when an Arab camp is all full of movement, whereas it seems deserted and inanimate so long as the sun is above the horizon. By day the camels, sheep, and goats roam over the plain in search of pasture,—

> The tents are all silent, the banners alone,
> The lances unlifted,

no one appears abroad; but the women spin and weave, and the men sleep or smoke. But at sunset all is life and bustle; men, women, and children

are heard calling home the camels, which answer the shrill cries of their keepers with long lowings. The horses neigh, the goats and sheep bleat, the

Encampment in the Desert.

dogs bark among the tents, the wild solitude becomes enlivened by a line of bright flickering fires, and a light column of smoke rises over every tent.—*Villarum culmina fumant.*

When supper time was come, a huge wooden bowl made its appearance, filled with a whole kid torn into small fragments and swimming in butter and gravy. Our appetites were too keen to allow us to be very fastidious; so we all gathered round in a circle, and the sheikh plunging his hand into the dish tore asunder several choice morsels, presented them to us, and then licked his fingers with delight. When the repast was over every one rose and wiped his fingers upon a piece of black cloth hung at one of the outer corners of the tent. This is called the *roffeh:* no man of good repute would sit beneath it. "Thy place is under the roffeh," is a proverbial expression of contempt.

Our next day's journey brought us to Karietein, a small village of mud houses, but from several marble fragments we saw there, we conjectured that it was once a considerable place—probably when Palmyra was in its prosperity. We left Karietein on the 28th. The track beyond it lies through a desert valley, with a sandy and stony soil, very scantily clothed with shrubs of a dirty clay colour. We marched eleven hours, till six o'clock P.M.; dined, slept till midnight, and mounted again. The moon was shining with

unclouded splendour, as our long caravan was once more in motion across the desert plain. The Arabs began to sing, which seemed to please the dromedaries, for they went on at a delightful ambling trot. I asked for an interpretation of the songs, but can only remember one verse, the oddity of which imprinted it on my memory; it was one in which a lover addressing a fair one named Ghalye, under the type of a camel, exclaims—

"O, Ghalye! if my father were a jackass I would sell him to buy Ghalye!" *

After three hours' riding, the sheikh called another halt; the night was very cold, and the dew heavy. After a short interval of rest by a blazing fire of camel dung, dried roots, and thorny plants, we continued to traverse the same wide monotonous plain, the further end of which was bounded by some blue mountain peaks, to which the Arabs pointed and shouted *Tadmor*, the ancient name of Palmyra, and the only one by which they know it. Gradually the two blue peaks we had first discerned were seen to be joined by a ridge of lofty hills bounding the plain on the east, and we found ourselves in an irregular ravine.

We rode in the gray light of dawn, perhaps for two hours, through the ravine, which seemed all at once to close in before us; but, in reality, the hills only approached each other somewhat nearer, and then spread out immediately beyond the contraction into a wide valley, in which lies Palmyra, or Tadmor. My heart beat as we climbed one of the hills to the right, and came, on the other side, to the ruins of an aqueduct which once conveyed water to the town. There is not the least trace of a green leaf, or of moss, in the channel above the stately arches; but all is dusty, and filled with a fine sand, which the wind sweeps before it. We now saw, near the aqueduct, right and left, and on the heights before us, some quadrangular towers of considerable altitude; the road passed close in front of one of them, and we found that it was an old tomb. Our Bedouins now charged up the last height with loud hurras, that echoed through the hills; we followed them, and from the summit we beheld the splendid ancient city stretched out before us—dead, and yet living for ever in its ruins.

It is not possible to describe a view like that of the ruins of Palmyra, or even to give a faint idea of their effect. There is no such thing as imagining a common standard by which to compare these remains with others of past times. Here there is no rich, luxuriant region, to the living loveliness of which the ruins might be as a foil and an ornament: there is nothing around but a seemingly interminable desert flat, stretching out in its inhospitable nakedness to the Euphrates; and the only thing to arrest the eye are the remains of the town—remains, so vast and numerous, that they can scarcely be compassed in two hours. Far from every living thing—far removed in time from the men and the condition of society that could produce such structures—stands an enormous multitude of Corinthian columns, the aspect of which is rendered still more singular by there being scarcely any walls near them. May we compare the countless slender shafts, with the curving

* Burckhardt.

foliage of their capitals, to a petrified grove of palms? No; it is rather the tulip-bed of a powerful fairy: some evil power has dried up the sap of the beautiful flowers, and we men now believe that what we see was once a town. Yes, truly, it was impossible for me to comprehend the prodigious spectacle presented to our view from the height. Let it not be expected, then, that I should attempt to depict it—the attempt would be useless; for, after all, every reader would have to call in the aid of his own fancy to enable him to reconstruct from my sketch the image of that vast ruin-covered plain; of those columns, which, seen from a distance, appear slender as the stems of tulips, and the bases of which are yet higher than a man's head, and that stretch out their marvellous vistas to the length of 3000 paces. We rode in speechless wonder down the hill, gazing with eager eyes on the scene before us.

Part of the Great Colonnade of Palmyra.

Descending to the plain, we stopped to drink at a well near the outer wall of the Temple of the Sun, and then pitched under an olive-tree in a deserted garden. This site of perished grandeur might once more be made a very agreeable spot by a proper distribution of two streams which are now entirely neglected by the Arabs; they are both of hot, sulphureous water, which, however, the inhabitants find wholesome and not disagreeable. The most considerable rises westward of the ruins from a beautiful grotto at the foot of the mountains, almost high enough in the middle to admit of one's standing upright. The whole bottom is a basin of very clear water some feet deep. The heat thus confined makes it an excellent bath, for which purpose the Arabs use it. The stream, which runs from it with a pretty

brisk current, is about a foot deep, and more than three feet over, confined in some places by an old paved channel; but, after a very short course, it is soaked up in the sand eastward of the ruins. While Palmyra flourished, this beautiful source must, no doubt, have been of great value. The other stream, the source of which we could not see, contains nearly the same quantity of water, and runs through the ruins in an ancient aqueduct under ground near the long portico, and in the same direction. It joins the first to the east of the ruins, and is lost with it in the sands. Besides these sulphureous streams, there was formerly a large quantity of well-tasted water conveyed to the town by an aqueduct very solidly constructed under ground, with openings at the top at certain distances to enable it to be kept clean. It is now broken about half a league from the town.* There are many palm-trees still at Tadmor; probably, however, of recent importation, for the few survivors of the ancient stock that flourished there at the end of the 17th century had all, save one, disappeared afterwards at the time of Wood's visit.

The Temple of the Sun, which singularly enough faces the west, stands in the centre of an immense court nearly seven hundred feet square, which is now entirely filled with the noisy houses of the Arab Palmyrenes. The Temple itself, now sadly dilapidated, was surrounded by a peristyle of fluted Corinthian columns with bronze capitals, all of which have disappeared, most pitiably exposing the naked surface of the stone to which they were attached. The great gate is the most beautiful I ever saw, next to the matchlsss one at Baalbec. The devices are very beautiful, consisting of branches of palm, bunches of grapes, flowers, fruits and garlands; but the design is superior to the execution; they are not cut deep enough, and the stone, moreover, has suffered much from exposure. A smaller door, that of the Temple itself, introduced us into a mosque, which fills up a great part of the interior; we saw a very curious ancient ceiling in one of the side apartments. Proceeding through other modern structures, we reached a gate, or doorway, ornamented with double fluted pillars, of no very chaste design, the ceiling displaying a Zodiac, and on the suffit of the architrave is the winged vulture soaring among the stars, an interesting proof, of which I observed similar instances at Baalbec and in the tombs of Palmyra, of the affinity of the Egyptian and Grecian sun-worship. I was much pleased with this Temple, but it is not to be compared with the Temple of the Sun at Baalbec.†

A little beyond the Temple of the Sun begins the great colonnade, which runs nearly from east to west; it is of great length and very beautiful. The columns are in good proportion and excellent preservation; each shaft consisting of three courses of stone admirably jointed, with a bracket for a bust or statue interposed between the second and third. In their present naked condition, these brackets are unsightly; yet, when they were surmounted by statues, the effect must have been extremely grand.

Advancing up the noble avenue, temples and public edifices attract the eye on all sides, all more or less in ruins, except a small temple of the time of Abraham, considerably to the north, and the most entire at Palmyra. But

* Wood. † Lord Lindsay.

its columns and richly sculptured portal have suffered wofully from wind and time. Beyond it,

O'er the still desert gleaming from afar,

stands a lofty, solitary, nameless column. We shall not attempt any detailed description of the ruins of Tadmor; it would be impossible, so hopeless is the confusion that prevails among them. It would be as vain an attempt to define the monuments of Palmyra from their shattered and half-buried remains, as to tell the names of a whole generation of men whose bones lie scattered through a valley or piled together in a catacomb.

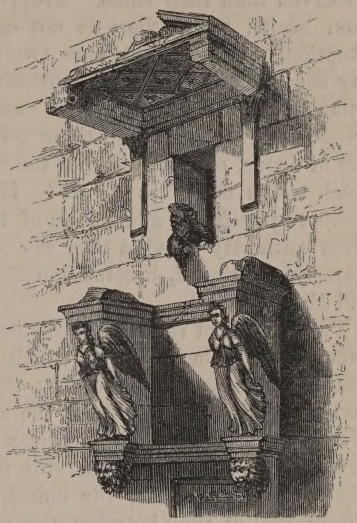
It is indeed a most striking scene; an awful stillness, a lifelessness pervades the ruins which I never felt anywhere else, except perhaps at Pæstum, where I do not even recollect hearing a bird sing. No huts encumber them, no filthy Arabs intrude on you; they stand as lonely and silent as when the last of the Palmyrenes departed, and left the city of Zenobia to silence and decay;—the fall of pillar after pillar has been the only note of time there, and that uncounted for centuries. One cannot occupy one's self with petty architectural details at Palmyra,—*within* the temple court I could criticise—*without* it, admire only; and at sunrise, at sunset, in the morning glow or in the evening calm, wandering among those columns so graceful in themselves, so beautiful in their sisterly harmony, I thought I had never seen such loveliness!—such awful loveliness!—lovely and yet awful: at times you almost feel as if Palmyra were a woman, and you stood by her corpse, stilled in death, but with a sweet smile lingering on her lip.

How different all this from Baalbec! *Here* one's eye is free as air,—how could it be otherwise at Tadmor in the wilderness? There it is cooped up within lofty walls; you cannot see the temple till you are close to it, and the details force themselves on your admiration;—and as for the great temple, which many travellers seem not to be aware *is* a temple, unfinished as it was left by the ancients; marred as it has been by the intrusion of modern buildings covering the whole platform, and hidden by the walls, so that from no one point within or without is it possible to view it as a whole —the eye is at first utterly bewildered, and even at last unable, except with imagination's aid, to estimate its grandeur.*

The necropolis of Palmyra lies half-an-hour north-west of the Temple of the Sun, in the *Wadi-el-Kebour*, the ravine through which we made our approach to the city. The tombs, which are very numerous, and extremely interesting, are almost all of them towers, two, three, four, and in one instance, five stories high. The tomb of Jamblichus, mentioned by Wood eighty years ago, is now dreadfully dilapidated; its stairs crumbled away, and the floor of the fourth story entirely gone. It is five stories high, and was built in the third year of the Christian era. That of Manaius is peculiarly interesting, and in some respects, indeed, the most curious building at Palmyra. It is in wonderful preservation, and its description will afford some idea of the others, as they are almost all built on the same plan, though far less beautiful. It is a lofty square tower, about fifteen feet in the side,

* Lord Lindsay. The dates assigned by his lordship to these buildings differ from those admitted by other authorities; see p. 234.

lessening by three courses of stonelike steps at about a third of its height. An inscription in honour of the deceased is engraved on a tablet over the doorway. The principal apartment is lined with four Corinthian pilasters on each side, with recesses between them for mummies; each recess divided into five tiers by shelves, only one of which retains its position. The ancient Palmyrenes buried their dead in the Egyptian manner, and Wood found, in one of the tombs, a mummy in all respects similar to those in the land of the Pharaohs. A Bedouin who accompanied me in my visit to the ruins told me, that there was formerly a great number of mummies in the sepulchres of Palmyra, but that the Arabs had carried them off and destroyed them in the hope of discovering treasure.* A statue in a reclining posture lay at the end of the tomb between two semi-pillars; busts, with inscriptions in the Palmyrene character, range between them, just below the cornice, and this again supports a false sarcophagus, sculptured with four busts, and covered by an embroidered cushion, on which the effigy of a dead body seems once to have lain. Two smaller Ionic pillars flank the sarcophagus. Several other busts, all with Palmyrene inscriptions, are sculptured in relief over the door of entrance, and that of the staircase which leads to the upper story. The ceiling, broken through in the centre, but perfect at both ends, is sculptured all over with a beautiful pattern, tastefully coloured, of white flowers on blue grounds, inclosed within small squares, and these within larger, formed by lines of deep brown crossing each other, with yellow knobs at the points of intersection. Towards each extremity of the ceiling, are two male busts, in Roman costume, on a blue ground, the colour as bright as if laid on yesterday. The cornice is beautiful,—the echinus or egg ornament, and roses between projecting modillions,—the same as that in the Library at Haigh, and which is found on almost every building at Palmyra and Baalbec. The upper and lower apartments display little or no ornament, except a pediment or two in the former. A doorway from the east led down by a flight of steps to the latter, the roof of which, forming the floor of the principal chamber, has fallen in. It has four large recesses for burial on each side. The date of this edifice is A.D. 103.†



Part of a Tomb at Palmyra.

It is impossible to view so many monuments of industry and power without wishing to be informed what age produced them, and what was the source of the immense riches they indicate; in a word, without inquiring into the history of Palmyra, and why it is so singularly situated in a kind of island separated from the habitable earth by an ocean of barren sands.

* B. Poujoulat. † Lord Lindsay.

But a singular destiny belongs to Palmyra and to Baalbec, for which the world has scarcely a parallel, except, perhaps, in the vast ruins of Yucatan. It is the natural and common fate of cities to have their memory longer preserved than their ruins. Troy, Babylon, and Memphis, are known only from books, while there is not one stone left on another to mark their situation. But here we have two instances of considerable towns outliving any account of them. Our curiosity about these places is raised rather by what we see than by what we read; and Baalbec and Palmyra are in a great measure left to tell their own story. Shall we attribute this to the loss of books, or conclude that the ancients did not think those buildings so much worth notice as we do? If we can admit the latter supposition, it seems to justify our admiration of their works. Their silence about Baalbec gives authority to what they say of Babylon; and the works of Palmyra, scarcely mentioned, become vouchers for those so much celebrated of Greece and Egypt.

Two classes of remains are distinguishable in Palmyra—one of these consists only of ruinous heaps, which evidently belonged to buildings of very remote and indefinite antiquity: the other class comprises the buildings still partly standing, and of these the age has been satisfactorily determined by Wood and Dawkins, from architectural considerations, and from the inscriptions which some of them still preserve. They consider the monument erected by Jamblichus, the oldest, and the work of Dioclesian, the latest; the interval of time between the two being about 300 years. The other rich and expensive buildings were no doubt erected before the last of these dates, and probably after the first; perhaps about the time Elabelus Manaius built his monument. What remains there are of the city wall do not look unlike the work of Justinian, and may be the repairs mentioned by Procopius. The highest antiquity anything else can claim, is the time of the Mamelukes.

There are strong grounds for concluding that as soon as the passage of the desert was found out and practised, the plentiful and constant springs of Palmyra must have been known; and that as soon as trade became the object of attention, such a situation must have been valuable as necessary to the keeping up an intercourse between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, being about twenty leagues distant from that river, and about forty from Tyre and Sidon, on the coast. This, no doubt, must have happened very soon, from the situation of this desert in the neighbourhood of the first civil societies we know anything of; and we have positive authority, from the writings of Moses, for a very early intercourse between Padan Aram (afterwards Mesopotamia) and the land of Canaan. Abraham's route from the one country to the other may very reasonably be supposed to have been through this desert, and the expeditious journey of Laban and Jacob from Haran to Mount Gilead, could certainly not have been performed by any other road.

But even without going farther back than the reign of Solomon, the invasion of Tadmor by that monarch is of itself sufficient to throw great light on the history of the city. "He built strong walls there," says the historian Josephus, "to secure himself in the possession, and named it Tadmor, which signifies the Place of Palm-trees." Hence it has been inferred

that Solomon was its first founder; but we should rather be led to conclude from this passage, that it was already a place of known importance. The palm trees he found there, are not the trees of uninhabited countries. Again, the king of Jerusalem would never have carried his attention to so distant and detached a spot, without some powerful motive of interest, and this interest could be no other than that of an extensive commerce, of which this place was already the emporium. This commerce extended to India, and the Persian Gulf was the principal point of union. Various points concur in corroborating this last assertion; nay, necessarily force us to acknowledge the Persian Gulf as the centre of the commerce of that *Ophir*, concerning which so many false hypotheses have been framed. For was it not in this Gulf that the Tyrians carried on a flourishing trade from the earliest ages, and are not the isles of *Tyrus* and *Aradus* sufficient proofs of the settlements they made there? If Solomon sought the alliance of the Tyrians—if he stood in need of their pilots to guide his vessels, must not the object of their voyage have been those places which they already frequented, and to which they repaired from their port of *Phœnicum oppidum* on the Red Sea, and perhaps from *Tor*, in which name we may discover traces of that of their own city? Are not pearls, which were one of the principal articles of the commerce of Solomon, almost the exclusive produce of the coast of the Gulf, between the isles of Tyrus and Aradus (now called Barham) and Cape Masandoum? Have not peacocks, which were so much admired by the Jews, been always supposed natives of that province of Persia which is adjacent to the Gulf? Did they not procure their monkeys from Yemen, which was in their way, and where they still abound? Was not Yemen the country of Saba (or Sheba), the queen of which brought frankincense and gold to the Jewish king? And is not the country of the Sabians celebrated by Strabo for producing great quantities of gold? Ophir has been sought for in India and in Africa; but is it not one of those twelve Arabian districts or tribes mentioned in the genealogical annals of the Hebrews? And ought it not, therefore, to be looked for in the vicinity of the countries they inhabit, since this genealogical geography always observes a certain order of situation, whatever Bochart and Calmet may say to the contrary? In short, do we not distinctly perceive the name of Ophir in that of *Ofor*, a town of the district of Oman, on the pearl coast? There is no longer any gold in that country; but that is of no consequence, since Strabo positively asserts that in the time of the Seleucidæ, the inhabitants of Gerrha, on the road to Babylon, obtained considerable quantities from it. On weighing all these circumstances, it must be admitted that the Persian Gulf was the centre of the most extensive commerce of the ancient eastern world, and that it was with a view of communicating with it by a shorter or more secure route, that Solomon turned his attention towards the Euphrates; and that, from the convenience of its situation, Palmyra must from that period have been a considerable city. We may even reasonably conjecture, when we reflect on the revolutions of the following ages, that this commerce became a principal cause of those wars in Lower Asia, for which the barren chronicles of those early times assign no motives. If after the reign of Solomon the Assyrians of Nineveh turned their ambitious views towards Chaldea and the lower part of the Euphrates,

it was with the intention of approaching that great source of opulence, the Persian Gulf. If Babylon, from being the vassal of Nineveh, in a short time became her rival and the seat of a new empire, it was because her situation rendered her the emporium of this lucrative trade; in short, if the kings of this great city waged perpetual wars with Jerusalem and Tyre, their object was not only to despoil those cities of their riches, but to prevent their invading their trade by the way of the Red Sea. John of Antioch, the historian, who has informed us that Nebuchadnezzar took possession of Tadmor before he laid siege to Jerusalem, clearly indicates that the former city acted in concert with the two neighbouring capitals. Their gradual decline became, under the Persian empire and the successors of Alexander, the efficient cause of the sudden greatness of Palmyra in the time of the Parthians and the Romans; having then become the barriers between those powers, "whose first care, when at war," as Pliny tells us, "was to engage her in their interest," she was politic enough to maintain a neutrality in their disputes, and to render the luxury of the two mighty rivals subservient to her own aggrandisement. She now enjoyed many centuries of peace, which allowed her inhabitants to erect those monuments of opulence which we still admire in their ruins; and they the more readily adopted this species of luxury, as the nature of the country permitted no other, and from the natural propensity of merchants in every nation to display their wealth in magnificent buildings. Odenatus and Zenobia carried this propensity to its greatest height; but by attempting to exceed its natural limits, they at once destroyed the equilibrium, and Palmyra, stripped by Aurelian of the power she had acquired in Syria, was besieged, taken and ravaged by that emperor, and lost in one day her liberty and security, which were the principal sources of her grandeur. From that period the perpetual wars of these countries, the devastations of conquerors, and the oppressions of despots, by impoverishing the people, have diminished the commerce, and destroyed the source that conveyed industry and opulence into the very heart of the Desert: the feeble channels that survive, serve only at this day to render the desolation of Palmyra more sensible and more complete.*

The weather has been very much changed for the last two days. This morning (Nov. 2), a siroc wind is blowing, and wild dark clouds are driving up from the south; yesterday rain fell for the first time since June. At midday we went to the source of the hot sulphureous stream, to bathe. You can penetrate along the grotto for twenty or thirty yards, swimming in a delicious basin of hot water. At the upper end, the passage is so contracted, and the air is so hot and suffocating, as to render it difficult to proceed.

From the bath I crossed over the sands amid the ruins of the ancient city to the circular temple, which commands a fine view of the whole country. It was a strange and wild day; the wind was every moment increasing, and whirling the sand in eddying columns through the air, whilst dark threatening clouds were collecting all along the mountain range on the outskirts of the Desert. I spent some time sketching under the shelter of the little temple, when suddenly a hurricane of wind swept through the columns and

* Volney.

filled the whole atmosphere with a dense fog of sand. One of my companions was tripped up by an Arab, and his head covered with a cloak, to protect him till the gust had passed. Every object ten yards distant was suddenly shrouded from view; then came a sudden lull, and the sand was seen pouring down in showers. The long line of columns was scarcely again visible, when a sudden flash of forked lightning darted down amongst them, instantaneously followed by a burst of thunder that made the tottering walls tremble, and large warm drops of rain pattered on the stones. Again the wind swept by, now driving clouds of sand, now scattering them, and opening an uninterrupted view across the desert, which was covered with a sombre leaden tint, reflecting back the gloomy colour of the dark thunder clouds that hung above it. The forked lightning darted in every direction, and loud peals of thunder reverberated from different quarters at the same time. The rain poured down in torrents and beat down the sand, and the whole scene was sublime.

Taking advantage of a sudden cessation of the rain, I ran towards Tadmor; just as I arrived at the gate it recommenced. I unfolded my umbrella; at the sight of it the Arabs in the gateway shouted with astonishment; they collected round me, examined its construction, and notwithstanding the rain followed me to the house, calling on everybody to come and look at the Frangi; which they did, shouting Mashallah! Elhem di lillah, "God be praised," &c.

We had an awful night of it. The rain came down in one universal deluge of water; the whole place was flooded; the rain poured through the roof of our house; and happy was the man who had an umbrella to spread over him as he sat up in bed. Pots, pans, and kettles were placed in every direction to catch the streams that poured from above, and fortunately it moderated a little, or we should have been almost drowned. The lightning was such as I never saw before; flash followed flash so instantaneously, that it was one continued blaze of light, in which the columns, the ruins, and the towers, backed by black clouds, presented a sublime appearance; and the view over the Desert, as flash after flash gleamed over the wide solitary waste, was the strangest and wildest imaginable. The wind had died away, the black clouds hung motionless, and the peals of thunder followed one another in such quick succession as to keep up one continued roll. Wet and miserable as we were, we could not but congratulate ourselves that this frightful tempest had not overtaken us in the Desert.

Nov. 4th.—What a lovely morning! The storm has blown off, and what a change! the air is now fresh and cold, and the Arabs gather their abbahs around them, not seeming to admire the altered weather. The thirsty soil, unwatered for nearly five months, has sucked up all the moisture, and early in the morning we mounted on horseback to make an excursion into the Desert, and to visit the plain of salt. The change in the weather has altered our determination of proceeding to the banks of the Euphrates, four days distant across the desert: nor will our Bedouins agree to guarantee our safety any further.*

The Desert is not the perfect flat it seems to be from above; slight undulations appear in different directions, but they are not sufficient to break the

* Addison.

dull uniformity of the landscape, which presents exactly the same cheerless aspect, our Arabs told us, for hundreds of miles. In different districts it varies much, and sometimes possesses a rich soil and a fine crop of herbage. Low aromatic shrubs are scattered all over it in large patches, and in many places it is clothed as far as the eye can reach, with glittering flowers; poppies of many colours, the Persian iris, lupins, mignonette, a very small species of basil (ocymum) and larkspurs, which grow over the plain in every direction, as thickly as blue-bells in a meadow. Still the aspect of the desert is painfully oppressive, and how often when the bleak wind was moaning over the dreary waste, particularly in the night, have I thought of the beauty and justice of the expression—"the howling wilderness." It is astonishing how the herds thrive as they do upon the dead dry plants. The dromedaries will pull up and devour dry prickly plants and thistles, which appear to possess no more nourishment than a bit of stick; yet they subsist and thrive on them for weeks and months. The stories we hear of moving sands and suffocating winds are not applicable to this desert. There is an extensive district of sand and dust along the mountains upon which the ruins of Palmyra stand, but these are never large enough to produce the effect they do in the great African deserts.*

I had contemplated the ruins of Palmyra at all hours of the day, and I wished to visit them once by night before I left them for ever. The mind is filled with indefinable emotions in wandering alone through this dead city when the countless stars are glittering in the sky, and the moon sheds its pallid lustre on the innumerable columns, the temples, palaces, and porticoes, the triumphal arches, and mouldering sepulchres. Stretched on the sand, which was still hot from the rays of the sun, with my head leaning on a fragment of a column, I listened to the rustling of the palm-trees in the wind, to the screeches of the night-birds that build their nests in the foliage of the capitals, and to the rippling of the water that flowed at my feet; and then I thought I could catch the faint sound of voices lost in space, and strange mysterious whispers, sighs and groans.

Bedouin.

My eyes wandered indifferently over the ruins, which my imagination moulded into fantastic shapes. My mind was thronged with a world of ideas; the black shadows of the columns, stretching out over the sand, seemed to me like phantoms that had come to weep over the corpse of Palmyra.

Among all these gigantic shadows, one smaller one particularly arrested my attention; for it was in motion, and projected itself—now on the sand,

* Addison. Skinner.

now on the *façade* of a tomb. It was the shadow of a Bedouin; he halted close before me, and I saw that he was armed with a gun. I thought he was going to attack me, and I grasped one of my pistols.

"Peace be to you!" said the Bedouin. "What are you doing alone amongst these ruins? Are you not afraid of the djiis?"

"And what are you doing here yourself?" was my reply.

"I am looking for one of my camels I have lost—that's all."

There was a moment's silence, and then the Bedouin said, in a grave and thoughtful tone—

"So, then, there was a time when another people than the Arabs dwelt in the city of Tadmor."

"Yes; a nation, great in war—in the arts and commerce—dwelt of old on this spot, where we now see nothing but ruins and dust. All has perished. The very tombs of Wadi-el-Kebour are empty."

The Arab, looking up, and pointing to the starry sky, replied—"God alone is great! God alone is eternal!" *

CHAPTER XVIII.

Damascus—Glimpses of the Domestic Habits of the Damascenes—An Armenian Wedding—A Turkish Dinner—Eastern Females—Character of the Turks and Arabs.

On our return to Damascus we were invited to exchange our quarters at the convent for the house of an Armenian merchant, a worthy man whose acquaintance we had made at Beyroot. The master of the house was not at home when we arrived, and we were received in a handsomely furnished apartment by a venerable-looking, gray-bearded gentleman, a relation of our host, who gave us a very ceremonious but kind welcome.

Turkish Ladies of Syria.

"Sel á mát ya Khowaga. I congratulate you on your safety. How is your health? Will you drink *shurbat?* Will you breakfast?"

On the second day after our arrival our host made his appearance; and as he remained at home one whole day to receive visits of congratulation on his safe return, we thought it but polite to sit with him the greater part of the forenoon. A constant succession of visitors flowed in from nine o'clock till

* B. Poujoulat.

late in the evening; and the kissing of hands and rubbing of beards together must have been very fatiguing to our fat friend.

There is something exceedingly graceful and pleasing in the Arab salutation. If the visitor happened to be somewhat inferior in station, he took our friend's hand, kissed it, and touched it with his forehead; if a common acquaintance, they shook hands, each kissing his own hand and raising it to his head; if near relations they embraced and kissed each other on each side of the face—then they kept ringing the changes on all the various forms of congratulation practised on such occasions.

"I congratulate you on your safety. I hope you are well."

"Praised be God! how is your health, Khowaga Elias?"

"El ham doo lillah! We were made desolate by thy absence, O Khowaga Djorious!"

"May God not make us desolate by thy absence, O Khowaga Elias!"

Then came the inquiry, "Who are the two strangers?" and, our names having been mispronounced in due form, the same touching of foreheads and congratulations, and inquiries after our health, were repeated. They make use of the same form of expression as the Muslims do, saying *El-hamdoo-Allah*, "praise be to Allah," *Allah ye sel limak*, "Allah preserve thee." *

There is a form of greeting and expressing thanks very common throughout the East; but which I have never seen so continually repeated as in Damascus. It is pleasing at first, but the constant repetition soon wears off the outward gloss, and it becomes tiresome. The right hand, by a rapid motion, seems to touch the heart, the lips, and the forehead; by which is expressed, "I will serve you with heart, word, and life." This exercise is gone through upon first entering the divan, and repeated with every fresh cup of coffee, both before and after drinking it, as well as with the brandy, pipes, and sugar-plums. It is likewise used when a compliment is paid, or a civil thing said; so that, if the visit lasts an hour, and the company are facetious, the right arm has no idle time.†

We were introduced by our host to one of the principal men of his nation in Damascus, a very distinguished and well-informed man. Ibrahim had placed him at the head of his nation in the municipal council, which at that time governed the city. This man, although he had never been out of Damascus, had very just and logical ideas on the political state of Europe, and more especially of France, on the general movement of the human mind at this epoch, on the impending changes in modern governments, and on the probable futurity of civilisation. I never conversed with any one in Europe whose views on these subjects were more precise and intelligent, which is the more extraordinary, as he was acquainted only with Latin and Greek, and had never been able to read those western works or journals, where such questions are brought to the level of those who echo without understanding them. Neither had he enjoyed any opportunity of conversing with the enlightened men of our climes. Damascus is a region without relations with Europe. He had accomplished the whole by means of geographical maps, and some striking historical and political facts, which had penetrated thus far, and which his natural and reflective genius had interpreted with a surprising sagacity.

* Kinnear. † Monro.

This gentleman has a daughter fourteen years old, who is the most divine creature we have ever beheld; her mother, still young, is also quite charming. He presented to me his son, a boy of twelve, whose education gives him considerable occupation. "You should send him into Europe," I said to him, "and let him have an education such as you regret for yourself. I will watch over it." "Alas!" he replied, "I am constantly thinking upon it, and it has long engaged my thoughts; but if the state of the East does not change, what service shall I have rendered my son by raising him, by his knowledge, above his age, and the country where he must live? What will he do at Damascus when he comes back with European science, manners, and taste for liberty? When a man must be a slave, it is better never to have known any state but slavery." *

Another Armenian—one of our new acquaintances—was about to marry his son to the daughter of a very wealthy merchant. We were invited to the festivity; and we were informed that we ought to be in readiness at an early hour in the afternoon, because, as we were distinguished guests, the bridegroom's father would send a number of his people to conduct us in ceremony to his house.

It was five in the afternoon when word was brought us that the merchant's envoys had presented themselves at our door, whereupon we went out to them and found a crowd of people assembled, who were all singing, in no very harmonious style, to the accompaniment of a flute and a fiddle. The musicians were preceded by two persons with torches and others with lanterns; and thus marshalled we arrived in the Armenian's court-yard, where we were obliged to wait a few minutes, among a number of boys seated round a fire. The master of the ceremonies, a very punchy Armenian, came up to us and led us into the antechamber, which was so crammed with people of all sorts, that it was almost impossible to get through without setting our elbows and fists in motion. At last we did make our way to the great saloon, at the door of which two servants knelt down to take off our shoes.

When we entered the room all present paid us the compliment of rising from their seats, and the master of the house led us up to the place of honour at the corner of the deewan. After we had seated ourselves, and motioned to the rest of the company to do the same, the Armenian bishop, who sat opposite us in the other corner of the deewan, saluted us, laying his hand on his heart and then on his forehead; and all the other guests followed his example.

These customary civilities having been duly interchanged, there came before us such a host of finely dressed servants, that I could not conceive what they could all find to do for us. But this is provided for by the customs of the East, which require the distinct services of one if not more attendants for every little duty, however trivial. Thus it was here: one of the attendants laid a gold embroidered napkin on the arm which each of us held out to receive it; a second knelt down before us with a silver wash-hand basin, and a third poured water over our hands from a silver ewer. A fourth, when we had washed, drew the napkin from our arms over our

* Lamartine.

fingers to dry them; then came a fifth and a sixth, each with a silver salver bearing crystal cups of sherbet and sweetmeats, and a seventh and eighth again with napkins to be used in case we had the misfortune to spill a drop between the cup and the lip. After these men had fulfilled their important tasks, a whole troop in the old Turkish garb, with turban and caftan, came and put long pipes in our mouths and presented us with coffee.

We smoked stoutly, and there was a general silence in the room, for every one was busy with his pipe. This *dolce far niente*, the gorgeous decorations of the apartment and the glittering of silken garments all round us, the aroma of the coffee and the delicious odour of the choice tobacco, put us into the best of humours, and carried us back in imagination to the old times of the right Oriental splendour, whereof in Damascus almost alone some lingering traces are still to be found. After a few rounds of pipes and coffee, we were left to repose for a quarter of an hour, during which nothing was done; at the end of that interval two small mattresses were spread at the entrance to the room, on which four persons, who now made their appearance, sat down. These were musicians, namely, two violinists, one of whom was blind, one flute-player, and one who beat the tambourine.

The concert began with a Turkish song, the beauties of which I was not capable of appreciating. The blind man then performed a solo, and preluded in so demoniac a style and with such desperate experiments on the strings, that to the very end of the piece I was under the impression that he was only tuning his instrument. After a torturing half-hour the artists at last concluded their concert with a song, which the blind man led in a nasal tone, the burthen being taken up in chorus by the other three. They then retired, and pipes and coffee were again presented.

It was now nine o'clock. Two children from eight to ten years old entered the room, each carrying a lighted green wax-candle set in a wooden candlestick, carved into the shape of a nosegay. They were followed by a man with a basket covered with a transparent gold embroidered cloth, through which it was easy to distinguish a gentleman's full suit, that formed the contents of the basket. The latter and the wax tapers were set down at the feet of the bishop, who rose from the deewan, and pronounced in concert with four other ecclesiastics a prayer, which was now and then interrupted by the voices of seven singing boys.

It struck us as curious that although we had been some hours in the house, we had as yet seen nothing of the bridegroom, the very person in whose honour the whole ceremony was held; but now, after the priests had pronounced their blessing upon the clothes, all eyes were turned to the door, at which there appeared a young man, about two-and-twenty, in the shabbiest dress. We took him at first for a beggar; he was tall but very pale, and hardly ventured to raise his eyes from the ground.

All on a sudden he began to undress before us; whereupon an old man, a relation of the bridegroom (I need hardly say that this latter personage and the young man were one), went up to the basket, and handed the bridegroom, one by one, the shirt, the shawl and the girdle, and the furred robe. The young man's father now stood up, took the fur cap from the basket, and, advancing with an air of solemnity to his son, kissed him thrice on the

forehead, and set the cap on his head; at the same time he put a ring on his finger with a splendid brilliant, the sparkling of which was visible all over the room. The bishop next came forward, and threw a gold-embroidered handkerchief of rose-coloured silk round the young man's neck, and put a similar one into his hand, which the young man pressed for an instant to his mouth and eyes. The master of the ceremonies then took hold of him and led him round the room, presenting him severally to each guest, whose hand he immediately kissed. Having finished the round of the room, he returned to his place by the door, and, seating himself between the two wax candles, remained there till supper time, eleven o'clock.

A small stand, about two feet high, was brought in, and on it was laid a great copper tray or table, at least fourteen feet in diameter, round the edge of which were laid slices of white bread, with radishes, celery, and parsley. A similar table was prepared for the clergy at the other end of the apartment.

As soon as the guests sat down to eat, the bridegroom withdrew to the antechamber, whence the insufferable music was again heard, though, to our great delight, it soon ceased. The airs played, as we learned from a person acquainted with the usages of the country, were old Arabian melodies, which the blind man accompanied, in his snuffling tone, with declamations from the Thousand and One Nights. The following was the bill of fare for supper:—Rice milk, leban, soup with a twang of mutton fat, roast mutton with rice, an *entrée* of roast meat, stewed pears, a turkey stuffed with rice, roast fowls, *entrée* of other meat, kebabs (little pieces of meat roasted on a wooden skewer), *entrée* of kid, pilau with sour milk and cheese. From time to time small glasses were handed round, filled with Lebanon wine, which, though very good and full-bodied, unfortunately always smacks strongly of the skins in which it is kept. It was brought in by servants better dressed and of superior station to those who served up the meat.

It was midnight when the table was cleared and removed, and then we had servants to wait on us with water, towels, and so forth, as before. When they were gone, two others came forward with censors and incense; and, while they fumigated us with the fragrant smoke, others scattered rose-water over our clothes from small crystal flasks. The bridegroom had not made his appearance all the time of supper; but as soon as the tables were removed, the poor youth again entered the room, and took up his old quarters between the two green candles at the door. And now began the sort of siesta, which the Turks designate by the untranslatable word *kief*, a sort of thing of which we Europeans have no conception.

Whenever we settle ourselves down for a nap with full stomachs, the thousand thoughts that never leave us immediately transform themselves into uneasy dreams, and we wake up at last from an unrefreshing sleep, half chilled, half bathed in perspiration. But the man of the East leans back on his deewan, thinks of nothing, and enjoys a pleasant state of composure between sleeping and waking, slowly inhaling and puffing out the smoke from his long pipe. The Prophet himself commends this siesta, saying, "Sleep the *kailuleh* sleep (*i. e.* the sleep after meals), for Satan sleeps it not."

This interval between acts lasted, on the present evening, upwards of an

hour and a half, during which midnight exercised its sway, and deep stillness pervaded the whole house. But all at once the instruments struck up, and the sleepers were instantly on the alert again. Every one talked, laughed, and told stories; till presently the master of the ceremonies stalked importantly into the middle of the room, and announced, with a loud voice, that it was time to go for the bride, and to conduct her to the church.

Upon this we all stood up and went out of doors, to fall into our places in the line of procession. This was headed by men bearing torches; then came the musicians, the place of honour next to them being assigned to us, to our no small affliction; the other guests followed; and, last of all, the bridegroom walked among the servants. After slowly pacing for about ten minutes through the dirty, ill-paved streets (it was a damp, foggy night), we arrived at the house of the bride's father, where we were again unbooted. Passing through a spacious hall, we entered a room where those friends of the family who held a second rank in the company were squatted round a manghal.

From this room we were admitted into the grand reception saloon, which was far more sumptuous still than that in the bridegroom's house. Opposite the entrance was a niche, containing an alabaster clock, and several pretty vases with artificial flowers. The windows, loftier than usual, were hung with silk curtains; the cushions of the deewan were covered with yellow silk, worked with flowers in brown velvet. On the carpet stood two manghals of very handsome workmanship, surrounded by large bronze candelabras with green wax-tapers.

First of all, we were welcomed in the usual manner; then came coffee and pipes; and whilst we smoked at our ease, the poor bridegroom went round the room and kissed the hand of everybody he had not previously saluted at his father's. Then came four artists, hired by the bride's father, and favoured us with several pieces of music, which were, unfortunately, no better than those we had heard before. Our stay here was not long, for the wedding procession now set out direct to the church.

We saw in the court a number of men crowded about a very richly-adorned white canopy, which was intended to be held over the bride. The procession set out on its march as before, but in a more lengthened line, the bridegroom being now followed by the bride's friends, and, lastly, by herself, mounted on horseback, and surrounded by a number of females on foot. She wore a white silk dress, reaching to the soles of her feet, and sprinkled with flowers wrought in gold. Her head-dress was a kerchief of white muslin, over which was another of red satin, that nearly concealed her whole face; and these were surmounted by a wooden contrivance, not unlike a soldier's chako rounded off at top. It required some effort of imagination to discover the form of a human head under this strange accoutrement.

It took us more than half an hour to reach the church, which should have been ready to receive us, but was so badly lighted that we could hardly discern the dome. This was supported by eight columns: on the left as we entered was a picture of St. George slaying the dragon, and on the right the door leading to the cloisters. We took our places before the high altar, and seats being brought us, we had leisure to examine the interior of the

church. Over the altar, which was approached by four steps of white marble, hung a picture of the Virgin; and right and left of this were portraits of St. Anne and St. Peter. A chandelier with yellow lights, that burned badly, was suspended in the middle of the nave, and some silver lamps were disposed here and there, without any regard to symmetry.

At last the bridegroom came forward, and was placed on the left side of the altar; to the right side of which the bride was immediately led by a veiled female. The bishop donned his richest robes, thickly beset with gold and silver, and took his place in a niche. Another clergyman joined the hands of the young couple, whilst a third pressed their heads together, and a boy, perched on a sort of scaffold, held a cross and a wax candle over their heads. They remained exactly in this posture for twenty minutes, during which time the bishop stood before them and said mass.

A chapter from St. Matthew, read by a deacon, closed the service; but as the reader happened unfortunately to be hunchbacked and to stutter curiously, we were obliged to bethink us very perseveringly of the solemnity of the occasion in order to keep from laughing. The clergyman then uttered a prayer, and tied a ribbon to the bridegroom's cap and the bride's helmet, thereby signifying that they were thenceforth bound together for life. I asked a person near me what was the meaning of the wooden head-piece worn by the bride, and he told me that it was intended to make her a match for her husband in height, so as to give them both to understand that there was a perfect equality between them, and that neither should pretend to carry the head higher than the other.

Finally, the married couple kissed a crucifix; the bride was led away by the same female who had placed her at the altar, and then conveyed on horseback, completely veiled, to her husband's house. About three o'clock in the morning was concluded this whole business, which had busied the minds of the natives for several weeks, and to which we strangers had sacrificed a night's rest. We were well content, however, once for all, to have seen an Armenian wedding in Syria.*

Having heard a great deal of the stud of Hassan Effendi, an influential Turk, we obtained an introduction to him. He immediately ordered his son and his equerry to conduct us to his vast stables, where he keeps thirty or forty of the most beautiful animals of the Desert. They were, in general, horses of a great height, of dark-gray or roan colour, with manes like black silk, eyes set wide apart, and clean and vigorous limbs. Their shoulders were broad and flat; their chest like the swan's. It was curious to witness the nervous excitement into which these horses were thrown when we entered. An assembly of true believers surprised in the mosque by a Christian intruder, could not have more vividly portrayed in attitude or countenance their indignation and alarm, than did these horses on seeing a strange face, and hearing an unknown language.

After the usual ceremony of pipes and coffee, we were civilly invited to dinner at noon on the following day. Punctual to our appointment, we waited so long that we began to think we had misunderstood the compliment. Visitors came in, pipes and coffee went round, until, wearied with the

* Hackländer.

monotony of the scene, we rose to depart. We were then reminded of our engagement, and politely asked if we preferred the European custom of separate plates, or would conform to the Oriental mode. We, of course, chose the latter, and were soon summoned to our repast. The Effendi first quitted the room, and we with several other guests followed without ceremony.

Crossing the court, each dipped his hands into the fountain, and towels were presented by servants. We then entered a large open recess, raised from the ground by a high step, leaving our slippers below. In the middle of this apartment stood a low table, which put us to some inconvenience by its diminutive size, as we all indiscriminately encircled it, sitting on the floor upon our heels. Upon this was a tray plentifully supplied with thin cakes, and liberally furnished with *silver* spoons. In the centre was placed a metal dish, standing on a high foot, and filled with a cone of minced and well-seasoned meat, swimming in a sauce of curdled milk, and garnished with rolls of fried paste. The dish was surrounded with several small basins of ordinary English ware, some of them containing a kind of salad, deliciously flavoured with cucumber, and pleasantly acidulated with sour milk; others held a vegetable, apparently of the gourd tribe, of a delicate flavour, fried or stewed in gravy. Our host set the example by first eating a portion of the paste, dipped in the sauce. He then took some of the contents of the principal dish, and occasionally of the others, on his bread, which he ate with his spoon. All then commenced, without invitation, in the same manner, and the servants (for several stood behind us) changed the dishes again and again, at the signal of their master.

Among the crowd of attendants that waited on us were two very fine lads, the nephews of our host. They did not, indeed, remove the dishes, nor perform the ordinary duties of a domestic servant, but they continued to stand while we ate, and occasionally poured out a cup of wine, or directed the servants, joining at the same time in our conversation. There is no servile feeling in this, which is no more than a mark of respect paid by all young men to their elders. Neither of these lads would have dreamed of sitting down to eat with their uncle, and scarcely ever received anything from his hand without kissing it; but there was no coldness or restraint in their intercourse, which was very evidently characterised by great kindness and affection, though with a certain degree of respectful deference on the part of the young men which, unhappily perhaps, is seldom seen in more civilised countries.

The dinner was really excellent. Different kinds of meat cut in small pieces were mixed with chopped vegetables or sauces, so that nothing required to be separated with the fingers. One dish—a stew of meat, damsons, and onions—I am ashamed to say, pleased me much. I was less delighted with a mixture of rice and spices rolled up in the young and tender leaves of the vine; a great favourite I believe with the natives. Pastry, stewed apricots, and other sweets were served without any perceptible order in the middle of the repast, and last of all came a pilau of mutton and rice. We had not much beef at the table, and, by-the-by it is a remarkable fact that the ox tribe are no favourites with the Turks. It is a common saying

among them that all the animal kingdom was converted to the true faith by their Prophet except the wild boar and the buffalo, which remained unbelievers; it is on this account that both these animals are sometimes called Christians. We are not surprised that the boar should be so denominated; but as the flesh of the buffalo as well as its leban or sour milk is much esteemed by the Turks, it is difficult to account for the disgrace in which that animal has fallen among them; the only reason I could learn from it is, that the buffalo, like the hog, has a habit of rolling in the mud, and of plunging into the muddy ponds in the summer time up to the very nose, which alone remains visible above the surface.*

The only beverage we had at our repast was water, which was presented, when asked for, in small coarse basins of English earthenware. Our entertainment was, after all, tedious enough, and almost a silent one. Each guest as he finished left the table, and, resuming his slippers, advanced to the fountain, where he was supplied with soap and a towel. All then assembled in the other apartment where, after repeating the ceremony of smoking, we took our leave.

Though but a sorry draughtsman, I wished to try my hand at sketching a very sumptuous apartment I had seen in one of my visits in the city. Permission was readily granted me. At first I was alone in the room, but by degrees several males of the family dropped in; and two daughters of the house, fine creatures, and fortunately unveiled, showed themselves now and then at the door; but they always darted away when I turned my head at the sound of their silvery laughter. At last I told the old gentleman, their father, that if they wished to see my performance they might come in, whereupon he replied, they would be glad to do so, but were afraid of disturbing me.

One of their brothers now called to them to come in, and they did so; but each of them had managed to find herself some little business, *pour se faire une contenance*. One bore a salver with a crystal goblet, containing syrup for sherbet; the other carried iced water; and a younger little sister had silver spoons in a small basket. We were soon on very good terms with each other; they sat down beside me, and greatly admired my very prenticelike handiwork. And then they showed me all kinds of little amiable attentions, sometimes handing me a fresh pipe, after having applied it for a moment to their own rosy lips; sometimes laying a live coal on the bowl when they thought the fire was extinguished. I was very sorry when the approach of darkness put an end to my artistic labours. Before I took my leave they preferred a petition to me through their brother, that I would draw something for each of them on a bit of paper. One asked for a portrait of a chair, another for that of a manghal, and the eldest of the three begged that I would draw her the figure of a ship that runs on wheels,

* Burckhardt. The same author states that, at Katana, one of the chief villages in the neighbourhood of Damascus, there is the tomb of a celebrated Santon in the mosque, and near it a hole in the rocky ground over which an apartment has been built for the reception of maniacs; they are put down into the hole, and a stone is placed over its mouth; here they remain for three or four days, after which, as the Turks pretend, they regain their senses. The Christians say that this Santon was a patriarch of Damascus, who left his flock and turned hermit; and that he gained great reputation among the Turks, because whenever he prostrated himself before the Deity *his sheep followed his example.*

i. e. a steam-vessel, of which she had heard some confused account. In return, I got them to write their names in my pocket-book, and we parted the best of friends.

To describe female costume is a difficult task for those who are neither professed artists, man-milliners, nor writers in the "Mirror of Fashion;" nevertheless we must make the attempt.

The hair is parted at the crown of the head; one part falls down over the neck, the rest is twisted into tresses with black silk resembling the hair, and descends to the feet. Little wreaths of gold or silver hang at the extremity of these tresses, and by their weight draw them down the full length of the figure;* small strings of pearls, of golden sequins, and of natural flowers, are scattered on the head, the whole mixed together with incredible profusion, as if the contents of a casket had been thrown at random upon the glossy, odorous hair. This barbaric luxury has the most picturesque effect upon young girls of fifteen to twenty years of age. On the top of the head some women wear a cap of carved gold, in the form of an inverted cup; from the middle of this cap a string of gold, with a row of pearls, hangs pendent down the back.

Lady of Damascus.

It is impossible to give an idea of the intense passion of the Orientals for perfumes: keenly susceptible of all sensual gratifications, they carry the love of flowers and sweet odours to the very highest degree. Fragrant essences of all kinds, especially otto of roses, are profusely employed in the toilet of the fair sex. Frequently when a harem or a file of women, carefully veiled, traverse the streets of a town, they embalm the air with an odour that remains long after they have passed.

Large, black, lustrous eyes, shaded with long lashes, have always been in high esteem among the Orientals, and the women have all recourse to the aid of art in enhancing the natural charms of their glorious orbs. They tinge the eyelashes and the edges of the eyelids with a black powder called *kohl* or *surmeh*, the effect of which is really very beautiful. So much cannot perhaps be said for the bright orange colour which they give their toes and fingers by means of a paste made of *henneh* powder, in which they wrap them up before they lie down at night. The tinging of the edges of the eyelids with kohl is a very old practice in the East, for it is mentioned in the Bible,† and from thence the fashion passed to the Roman ladies, who applied the powder in the manner and with the instruments in use in the present day. ‡

* See the figure of the dancing girl at p. 191.

† II. Kings, ix. 30. Our authorized version says Jezebel "painted her face;" the Vulgate reads *depinxit oculos suos*, "painted her eyes."

‡ Juvenal, Sat. II.

Dining with the British Consul we met M. Baudin, a gentleman of whose intelligent good nature all travellers who have known him speak with gratitude and respect. He was accompanied by his lady—I believe a Damascene Christian—in the full costume of the country. The lady's dress was magnificent, being exactly the same as that worn by the Damascene ladies in full dress in their houses. She had wide richly-figured trousers, her bare white foot was thrust into an elegant purple slipper, richly embroidered with gold, having a silk tassel at top, and a jewel fastened beside it.

Her bosom was concealed by a thin fold of gauze, her vest of pink-figured silk, fringed with gold, was open at the breast, and confined to the waist by a Cashmere shawl, from which descended a long figured robe, which hung down behind, trailing on the ground, and, descending in front, divided into two long lappels, partially concealing the trousers. Over the vest was a dark purple jacket, confined to the waist behind by a Cashmere shawl, but standing open in front, lined with white satin, and embroidered all round the edges with gold; the arms were slit open from the elbow downwards, falling back in long lappels, lined with white satin, and edged with gold, displaying the arm from the elbow enveloped in a transparent inner gauze sleeve, edged with lace. She had bracelets on her arms, a pearl necklace round her neck, a small dark velvet turban with a string of pearls on the side of her head, and her long hair hung down behind, touching the divan on which she sat. On going out of doors, a large wrapper and veil completely conceal all this finery.

Mrs. Farren had promised one of our party that she would get a beautiful Damascene girl, about eighteen, living with her, to appear in full Damascene costume, in order that a sketch might be taken of the dress. Although the constant companion of Mrs. Farren, being a girl of good connections in Damascus, yet we had never once caught a glimpse of her. We were told that one or two of us might drop in and get a peep, as if by chance, while the sketch was taking; but to be cautious, otherwise she would immediately run away. When I went in she was standing against a corner of the divan, by Mrs. Farren's side, at first very shy, covering her face with her hands; and on paper, pencil, and brushes being produced, she was told but little could be done if she covered her face, when she pulled away her hands and turned aside her head, bursting into a loud laugh. She had a very white skin, large full black eyes, a very proud haughty look, and kept kicking the marble pavement with her slipper, looking at us with a contemptuous curl of the lip, then at Mrs. Farren, and then again bursting into a loud laugh. She had beautiful teeth and a fine bust, and was really a sweet little thing, but very pouting and proud. Her dress, though not so splendid as Madame Baudin's, yet was more stylishly worn, and seemed a more correct costume. Round her head she wore a double row of zecchines, or Turkish gold coins, which were brought across the forehead, closely strung together; a turban was placed on one side of her head from under which her hair fell down in long tresses, intermixed with silk cords and beads. She had large ample trousers of a dark material, thickly figured, partially concealed by a robe, cut into three portions, being slit open at either side, and in front, trailing on the ground, and confined to the waist by a shawl. She

had a scarlet jacket, embroidered, both before and behind, with black silk lace and gold; the sleeves fitted close round the arm, just above the elbow, but from under them descended a rich figured silk and cotton lappel, hanging down and displaying the arm from the elbow, enveloped in a transparent gauze shirt-sleeve, and covered with bracelets; a light embroidered handkerchief tied in a knot, forming part of the turban, fell in graceful folds on one side of her head. She had a necklace of gold coins, and her feet, enveloped in small embroidered slippers, were thrust into the kabkabs, or high black pattens, worn by the ladies inside the house when they walk off the rich soft carpets. The ends of the shawl round her waist, tied in a knot, and edged with a pretty fringe, descended in folds nearly to her feet.*

In the annexed cut the artist has represented a modern and an antiquated costume—for fashion asserts its prerogative of change even in the constant East. The lady on the left is clad in the modern style of the Levant, and her companion (who holds a rose in her hand) is portrayed in the identical dress worn fifty years ago by the artist's grandmother, who was a native of Smyrna.

Levantine Costumes.

"*Apropos* of ladies' costume," remarks Lord Lindsay, "it may not generally be known that bussels and patches are both of Eastern origin. Patches were, according to Abulghazi Khan, a favourite ornament of the ladies of Tungoose Tartary; and D'Arvieux considers the fashion still general among the Arab women, of ornamenting their faces with small punctured marks, as an approximation to them. It was reserved for the ladies of England to invest patches with the dignity of party signals; (see the *Spectator*, No. 81). Bussels are of Persian origin, being, as Dr. Nott observes, in his notes on the Odes of Hafiz, 'the *refaight*, or the kind of bolster which the Persian ladies fixed to the under garment, and which was to produce a certain roundness, which they thought becoming.'"

* Addison.

Very erroneous notions generally prevail in Europe respecting the condition of Eastern women,—and this reminds us of a little incident noted by Mr. Paxton at the village of Zebdeni, on his way to Damascus. "We had finished our supper," he says, "and were going to bed, when some family quarrel or another broke out among the villagers, and for a short time there was a terrible strife of tongues. It died away in part, and I hoped was about to terminate, but was revived and continued mainly between one man and woman as the voices indicated; and such a scold I have seldom heard! The woman appeared manifestly to have the advantage: her tongue must have been used before, or it could not have been wielded with such terrible power on the present occasion. The adversary (whether neighbour, or brother, or husband I know not, but suspect it was the latter) appeared to feel that he had a losing case. He yielded, lowered his tone, let her do two-thirds, three-fourths, and towards the last a still larger portion of the talking. Such a storm could not last for ever, it gradually subsided, and the voices became silent.

"It was a Mohammedan village, and this probably a Mohammedan wife maintaining her rights against an unkind or petulant husband. Verily, we of the western world are far from the truth in the judgments we form about the domestic manners and intercourse of the Mohammedans, and especially their mode of treating their wives. We not only take it for granted, that they believe (which they do not) that their women have no souls; but we suppose the latter have no rights, no privileges, and dare hardly lookat their lords, much less speak to them, but with fear and trembling. Now all this is wide of the mark. The Mohammedan ladies have their rights as well as our own fair ones, and know how to stand up for them; and the female tongue is fully as powerful an instrument in the East as it is in the West. Judging from what I used to hear when a boy about the Muslims, I should have expected to see this nimble-tongued lady put in a sack and thrown in the river; or, as the water is rather too precious here to be used for drowning scolds, I should, at least, have expected to see her head cut off and her tongue nailed up as a terror to others. But it was plain the vixen was in no fear of such treatment; the people of the place instead of coming to the relief of the man were glad to keep out of harm's way; the ruler of the village knew better than to intermeddle with other people's matters; and the man himself received a lesson which I hope may have done him more good than it did me."

In truth we Europeans are strangely mistaken in supposing the women of the East to be necessarily unhappy: even were the conditions imposed on them far more iniquitous and oppressive than they really are, we ought not to forget the beneficent effect of custom in reconciling human beings to their inevitable destiny. What the inmates of the harems hear of the degree of liberty enjoyed by their sisters of the West only provokes their pity or offends their sense of propriety, but never excites their envy. Nor are they themselves subjected to such rigorous restraint as is commonly supposed. The Muslim ladies often visit each other in the harem, and on these occasions a white veil hung outside the door warns the master of the house that he must not intrude while the visitors remain—a signal which he respects as

religiously as the Spaniard formerly did the monk's sandals left before the door of his wife's apartment. They congregate together in the baths, and pass their afternoons unrestrained by the presence of the men; and they are to be met with in the bazaars and public places, wrapped in their loose walking cloaks and veils, and undistinguishable even by their own husbands. A Mohammedan woman's property is as secure as that of a man: a wife's fortune is her own, and does not, as amongst us, become the property of her husband. If the latter can divorce his wife, the wife also can divorce the husband, and the mother of a son is absolute mistress: nor is it a trifling prerogative of the sex that the servant or the slave can marry the master or his son without exciting animadversion, or entailing reproach on her helpmate or his family. The women are treated by the men with a respect they do not always show in return; and when a woman addresses a man he reverently cast his eyes on the ground: nay, the very idea of woman is invested with a sanctity that extends to everything belonging to her. It arrests the arm of justice, and lawless violence sinks abashed before it. The wife is independent of the political dangers that threaten her husband, except as they affect her through him; her life, her person, her property, even her establishment, is sacred and secure. There is no instance of a pasha or officer of any description forcing his way into the hallowed precincts of the harem; there no decree can be executed against the master of the house; he must be summoned elsewhere, or waited for till he quits it; and any criminal condemned to death must be pardoned if on his way to execution he meets the women of a harem, and can touch the hem of the veil worn by one of them, or if he can lay his hand on the door of a married woman's dwelling and cry *fiardek el harem.*

Too many travellers—speaking of a thing they knew only by vague report—have propagated and confirmed the vulgar notion that the harem is a dismal prison where lovely women languish in captivity under a jealous tyrant—an odious haunt, devoted only to brutal, sensual indulgence. This is no more worthy of credence, than the tales of those other travellers who would have us believe that their own enterprising gallantry had triumphed over all the defences of the guarded enclosure. The harem is the hearth, the home, the one spot on earth which each man calls his own, secret and forbidden. It is his wife in whose behalf this sanctuary is created; it exists only in her, and wherever she is, there it is also. One thing only mars the beautiful constitution of the Eastern home, and impairs its happiness—that is the recognition of polygamy, as a principle sanctioned by the laws. But without offering any apology for the principle, we may venture to say that very exaggerated notions prevail as to the extent to which it is really acted on; and it may even be questioned whether the practical polygamy of the West, which, unsanctioned by law, and reproved by custom, adds degradation of the mind to dissoluteness of morals, is not a greater evil than the tolerated polygamy of the East.

Instances are not rare in Mohammedan countries of a husband possessing but one wife: in such cases, if there be a natural kindness of disposition on either side, it can hardly fail to ripen into strong, concentrated, reciprocal affection. The retirement and solitude of the harem offer nothing to divert

the mind from the one absorbing passion: the wife's whole business and pleasure are centred in her husband and her children, and his eyes do not "wander after strange women." This domestic happiness and virtue are, however, not common to all parts of the East. Rare, though not unknown, among the Arabs, it is more peculiarly Turkish; and the deep root which the love of home (not the spot of birth, but the hearth, wherever placed) has struck into that people, cannot be better demonstrated than by its capacity to overcome the effects of the continual introduction, as slaves or wives, of perhaps the most dissolute races on the face of the earth—the Georgian and the Arab.*

The dominion of the Turks in Syria dates from the conquest of that country, by Selim I., in 1516. The Turkish families that settled there after that event comported themselves as conquerors and masters, and always kept disdainfully aloof from the vanquished. The three hundred years that have since elapsed have not led even to an incipient approximation between the two races, this being rendered difficult, in spite of the common bond of religion, by their total dissimilarity in character.

To this very day the name of Turk is surrounded in the eyes of the Arab with a singular halo of dignity. It is a curious spectacle to a European to see the lowest Turkish cawass stalking into the midst of a party of Arabs, assuming the seat of honour, talking in a peremptory and oracular tone, and laying down the law to the whole company; and all this as a matter of course, simply because he is a Turk, and seems to feel instinctively the natural superiority of his race.

And that race in Syria has always preserved its blood remarkably free from all Arab intermixture, having been continually recruited by Circassian, Georgian, and Mingrelian women, purchased of the Tatar slave-dealers. To this day the Turks of Syria intermarry only with their own race, or procure their wives from the bazaars of Smyrna or Constantinople. To this constant infusion of foreign blood is owing perhaps the superior beauty and symmetry of the Ottoman stock.

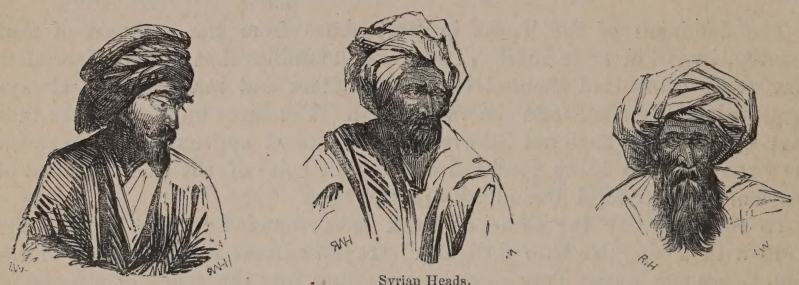
It appears from the report of one of our consuls, that whereas other branches of trade have increased considerably of late years, the importation of beauties from the Caucasus has very much diminished. No one perhaps more regrets this commercial decline than the fair objects themselves of such speculations. During Mr. Bell's residence in Circassia he had many opportunities of observing, that the young ladies of the country, far from being seized with horror and dismay at the prospect of being bought and sold like cattle in Constantinople, looked forward with delight to such an event as the luckiest thing that could befall them. They looked to Turkey with an eye to an eligible establishment in life, with feelings akin to those of certain young ladies brought up for what used to be called the Indian market, and "wished to God that somebody would buy them."

Hitherto the mutual relation of the two classes—the Turk and the Arab—has ever been that of domination on the one side, and total subjection on the other. The former has monopolised the power, the honours, and the advan-

* Urquhart. Lane. Perrier.

tages of the state—the latter has been doomed to submission, self-denial, and toil. If the Arab has sometimes raised his head and endeavoured to resist his master, it has always been in defence of his property or his pecuniary interests—never in vindication of his moral dignity or his national rights. And yet the advantage of numbers and of physical force was on his side, whilst the Turk was backed only by moral force, and the instinct of command.

It is therefore to the primary difference between the moral constitutions of the two races that we must refer for the cause of the prodigious inequality in their actual respective conditions.



Syrian Heads.

The Arab on the whole has little firmness and stability of character; his imagination is too vivid—his excitability too great. Self-reliance he has none; but evidently feels his need of being governed and guided. When he is thrown upon his own resources, his timidity is extreme; whereas, when under the influence of a strong hand, he is capable of rushing to the extreme of temerity. The least breath of honour puffs him up beyond measure; his vanity knows no bounds; and when dressed in a little authority he makes its abuses cruelly felt by his subordinates. To these defects in his character he adds other vices, which he carries to excess—covetousness, ingratitude, jealousy, faithlessness, and indolence.

Some will have it that these vices are those of a people long enslaved: may it not be asserted with as much reason, that these same vices were among the chief causes of its falling into slavery?

The virtues of the Arab are rather religious than innate, inasmuch as they flow from the precepts of the Koran, and from the law of Mohammed. No people carries to a higher pitch stoic self-denial, resignation, hospitality towards strangers and towards the poor, and the pride of religious fanaticism.

The Turk, on the other hand, seems born to command; he pushes his confidence in himself to an excess that degenerates into the most incredible presumption. In all he does his bearing is calm, grave, full of dignity and grandeur. An artisan of the lowest grade, suddenly elevated to high rank, will know how to assume instantly the tone and the manners suitable to his new position, and to make his authority respected. He will no longer be the man he was yesterday—the metamorphosis is complete; but he does not seek to hide the recollection of his former life; on the contrary, he regards

it with pride, and generally adds the name of his humble trade to the title of his new dignity.* The good faith of the Turk in his dealings, above all with Christians and strangers, is proverbial; but possibly this good faith is in him not so much an inherent virtue as an effect of that religious pride that shows itself in all his acts.

The Turk is too often open to the charge of cruelty and bloody violence; but such acts are commonly the necessary result of his position with regard to those under his rule. His crimes, when his passions are roused, are those of the beast of prey—violence, with an object: they are never those of the monkey or the inquisitor: he never does mischief for its own sake, or on principle.

Covetous of money to the highest degree, he will disdain to seek it by low and sordid acts, and will sooner have recourse to open violence; but there are occasions when the Turk is generous to prodigality. His outward demeanour is full of good breeding, and exceedingly winning and pleasing. It must be owned, however, that, under this insinuating show, he often conceals treachery and malignity. There is no people among whom the art of dissimulation is carried so far. Nothing more strongly illustrates their character in this respect than one of their own favourite proverbs: "Lick the hand thou canst not wound; lick it till thou canst bite it."

The Arabs, too, have a proverb which they apply to the Turks, and which is not less characteristic than the former: "If the Turk turns musk to creep into thy pocket, make a hole in that pocket to let him escape, before he becomes a red-hot coal." †

"In expressing," says Mr. Urquhart, "the admiration with which the Turkish character inspires me, I must restrict that praise entirely to its domestic and passive existence—to the Turk—son, husband, father, master, neighbour; whatever qualities he may possess flow from these characters. He his brave, because he defends his home; he his docile, because he had a father; he is not factious, because the unity of the state includes and represents that of the family; he his faithful to treaties, because he lives well with his friends. The Turk—agriculturist, seaman, general, mechanic, or professor—is as far below other European nations as he is above any of them in his domestic virtues or his social integrity. He exists, therefore he has a place among nations, only in consequence of these which, again, are not the result of principle, but of habit; and of habits—the impress of which is derived from the harem. This empire has resisted overwhelming power and wrong; but now a more fearful trial awaits it; that is, not so much the fact of adopting other manners, as the fact of change. The change of habits will not lead, supposing it were desirable, to the introduction of those of Europe, but merely to the destruction of their own. A reaction against Europe may finally be the result of hopes disappointed and of imitation unsuccessful, when they will no longer possess a national character to fall back upon. The only changes, that can be beneficial to Turkey, must come invisibly and slowly; and such benefits reside solely in individual instruction, in rendering literature popular and useful, in the extension of the

* E. g. Mohammed-Baltrain Pasha, Mohammed the wood-cutter, who was grand vizier; Ahmed-Djezzer, Hassan-Chiboocgi-Bey, etc. † Perrier.

principles, and in the application of the results of science. Wherever manners, customs, laws, institutions are touched, evil is done, and danger created. It is only after *they* have become acquainted thoroughly with Europe, that they can know what to imitate. The changes which affect the manners of a people, when produced by external causes, must be destructive of its moral and domestic qualities. Those trivial modes and habits which are the language of morality, becoming confused, a confusion of ideas takes place, which lowers the tone of the mind. The old habits are lost; the new ones, be they perfection itself, are mere ineffective forms. And thus, wherever Easterns and Europeans come into contact in numbers, the degradation of both ensues. The Europeans, being possessed of greater military and political power, the Easterns have suffered most from this contact. The standard of morality among the Europeans being lower, the tendency of their superiority is naturally towards the extinction of Eastern character, and with it institutions and independence: of this, Greece is a melancholy example."

Syrian Muslim

CHAPTER XIX.

Baalbec.*

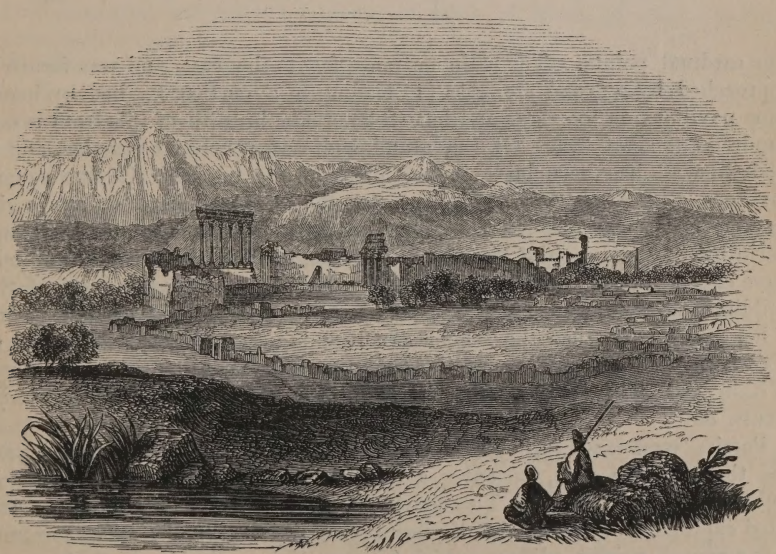
Starting from Damascus for Baalbec we came in about an hour to the Barrada, rapidly flowing over its bed of rocks, and followed its course for several hours among the loveliest groves of poplars, figs, walnuts, olives, pomegranates, and vines; through which innumerable bright and clear streams, springing from the rocks close to the road side, run merrily down to the river. At five hours and three quarters from Damascus we entered a wild mountain pass, through which the Barrada comes foaming down like a maniac. The road and the river occupy between them the few fathoms' breadth of the defile. The bare walls rise up perpendicularly on either hand some hundred feet above the stream, and high up in them are excavated chambers, probably tombs, with small buttressed doorways, inaccessible without scaling ladders. In two places also channels are cut along the face of the rock above the road, remains, no doubt, of aqueducts intended for carrying water thus high, that on clearing the pass it might be used for watering a wide space of country on the eastern side, which modern neglect has suffered to relapse into almost utter barrenness.

Presently, after passing a very beautiful waterfall on the left, we emerged into the upper valley of the Barrada, where it flows as gentle as infancy, yet diffusing verdure and fertility all around it. The soil of the valley is very

* Volney. Richardson. Burckhardt. Lindsay. Hogg. Addison. Lamartine.

rich and well cultivated, and the scenery became more and more beautiful as we advanced, and very English too: the vineyards were protected each by its low wall and hedge; cross barred gates, which it would puzzle a fox-hunter to clear, secured every field; and our approach to Zebdeni, our halting place that night, was through green lanes bordered by lofty hedges of wild roses and other flowers, as shady and cool as those of old England. Next day we crossed Antilebanon, from the summit of which we looked down on the plain of the Bekaa, spread like a carpet to the foot of Lebanon; and after a tedious ride through the uninteresting hills that intervene between the plain and the actual foot of Antilebanon, we caught sight of a long line of trees, marking the course of a stream towards the centre of the valley, and (as it seemed) a castle rising above them, with a lofty tower, which resolved itself as we drew nearer into six stately columns: this was Baalbec.

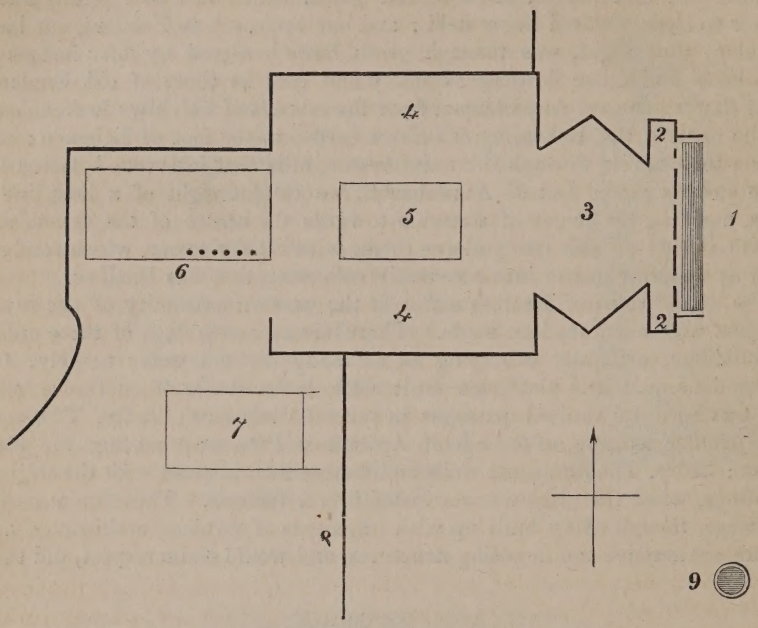
The grand ruins of Baalbec stand at the western extremity of the town, and just within the modern walls. There are an assemblage of three orders of buildings, evidently belonging to as many distinct eras; namely, 1st, Stupendous walls and platforms, built with hewn stones of enormous bulk, and traversed by vaulted passages in several directions: 2ndly, Two very large Roman temples, of the age of Antoninus Pius, surmounting the platforms: 3rdly, The Saracenic walls and towers incorporated with the original buildings, when the place was converted into a fortress. These more recent additions, though oddly built up with fragments of cornices, architraves, and pillars, are massive and imposing structures, and would claim respect, did they



General view of Baalbec.

not contrast so incongruously with the more venerable relics which they encumber and obscure.

The main walls of the temples and of their enclosures correspond to the



four cardinal points. The main entrance fronts the east, and was formerly approached by a grand staircase (1) leading to a portico, flanked by handsome pavilions on the right and left (2 2). The breadth of this front is one hundred and sixty feet. Of the grand staircase no vestige remains, and a modern wall has been built in the place of the portico. Of the square pavilions, altered as they have been by the Saracens, that on the right remains in tolerable preservation: you enter it under an arch flanked by square Corinthian pillars, each of two blocks of stone, lessening towards the capital: these extraordinary columns give an Egyptian character to this part of the building—a circumstance which Lord Lindsay considers rather confirmatory of his own theory, that the whole structure is to be referred to the age of Hadrian, when a strong bias to the Egyptian style prevailed in architecture. Within the pavilion you find beautiful niches for statues, with pediments, &c.

Passing westwards through a breach in the wall of fragments that blockade the principle gate, we enter a hexagonal court, of one hundred and eighty feet in diameter (3). This court is strewed with broken columns, mutilated capitals, and the remains of pilasters, entablatures, and cornices; around it is a row of ruined edifices, which fifty years ago displayed all the ornaments of the richest architecture, though now so dilapidated, that their original character is no longer discoverable. At the western end of this court is an outlet, formerly a gate, through which we perceive a still more

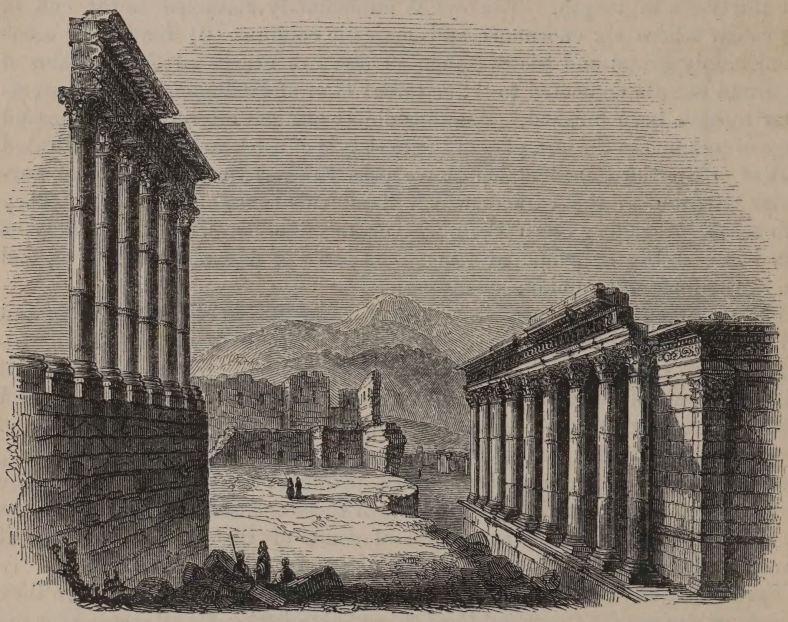
extensive range of ruins, the magnificence of which strongly excites our curiosity. To have a full view of these, we must ascend a slope, up which were the steps to this gate, and then we arrive at the entrance of a quadrangular court (4), three hundred and fifty feet wide, and three hundred and thirty-six in length. The eye is immediately attracted to the end of this court, where six enormous and majestic columns (6) render the scene astonishingly grand and picturesque. These are nearly all that remains of the grand temple dedicated to "the Great God of Heliopolis," which seems never to have been finished. Another object not less interesting is a second range of columns to the left, part of the peristyle of the lesser temple, dedicated to Baal or the sun (7); but before we pass thither, we cannot refuse particular attention to the edifices which flank this court on each side. They form a sort of gallery with chambers or recesses, seven of which may be traced in each of the principal wings; viz., two of a semicircular form, and five in the form of an oblong quadrangle.

The chambers are decorated with most beautifully sculptured niches and pediments, friezes, and cornices; and similar niches richly ornamented project between each recess. The beauty of some of the friezes is beyond all praise; in one of them Lord Lindsay discovered the orb with wings, and serpents precisely the same as those which figure on every Egyptian temple. A bold cornice all along the wall gives a fine effect to the whole by forming alternately a semicircular and a pointed pediment over each recess. The columns that once formed the open front of these chambers towards the court are all destroyed, but fallen fragments of some of them, of most beautiful granite, still remain.

Various are the conjectures as to the use of these apartments: Were they chapels or shrines for the worship of subordinate deities?—or recesses for the philosophers to sit and lecture in?—or lodgings for the priests?—or was the great court a forum, and were these sheltered places intended for the convenience of the merchants, the civil functionaries, or the people? It is in vain we toil after a solution of these enigmas; we cannot re-construct in thought, and re-people as of old, the public buildings of an age, or of a nation of whose religious or secular usages we have no thorough knowledge. Nevertheless our ignorance of the purposes for which these chambers were intended cannot mar our admiration of their exceeding beauty and richness of decoration, and of the singularly picturesque effect which results from the mixture of the garlands and the large foliage of the capitals, with the living sculpture of wild plants that spring from every chink, and profusely adorn the marble.

In the centre of the court are traces of a small enclosure or cella, (5) of which nothing now remains but the foundations. Passing this esplanade we arrive at last at the glory of Baalbec, the six surviving columns of the great temple. They are the principal object in every view of the ruins, but their most pleasing aspect I thought was from a little Corinthian temple to the south of the platform, where the wall has been broken down. Viewed, however, near or far they are equally worthy of love and admiration,—whether you watch them from a distance, or, looking upward from their feet, criticise their details, the chaste ornament of their soffit, their rich frieze,

their superb cornice—and pronounce them faultless. Palmyra at sunrise, and Baalbec at sunset, are Claudes treasured in the cabinet of the memory, which neither accident can injure nor beggary deprive one of.*



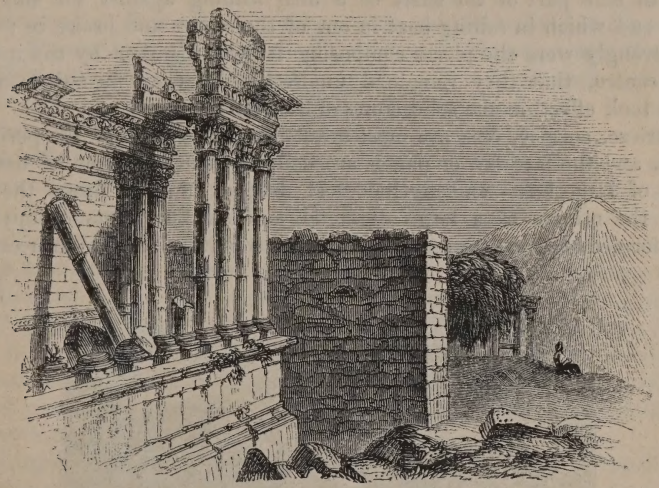
The ruins of Baalbec from the west.

The shafts of these columns are twenty-one feet eight inches in circumference, and fifty-eight high; so that their total height including the entablature is from seventy-one to seventy-two feet: to this we add the height of the base on which they stand, the sum gives one hundred and twenty feet as the elevation of the top of the pediment above the ground. The length of the building of which these columns formed a part was nearly two hundred and ninety feet, the width one hundred and sixty. There were nine of them standing in 1751; three have since fallen; but in the opposite Saracenic wall several bases and some of them still surmounted with wrecks of their enormous shafts are enclosed in the masonry. Thus it may easily be perceived that each side of this edifice consisted of seventeen of these gigantic columns (not counting those at the corners), and the east and west forms each of ten, making in all fifty-four. Many of these have fallen in various directions, and mingled with the masses of the frieze and architrave they supported, filling up the whole space, vast as it is, with ponderous fragments.

The ground on which the great temple stood was an oblong quadrangle on a level with the main court, but narrower than it, so that there was only a terrace of twenty-seven feet wide round the colonnade.

* Lord Lindsay.

The Temple of the Sun stands directly south of the Great Temple, and the best view of commanding its northern and western *façades*, is from



Temple of the Sun, south side.

underneath the six pillars. The platform on which it stands adjoins the great one, but is considerably lower; and indeed appears to be a later construction built up against it. It is only by comparison, however, that either platform or temple can be spoken of as small. The Temple of the Sun is the most perfect monument in Baalbec, and more than one traveller has declared that there exists none more magnificent in the whole world.* Set up again on their pedestals a few columns lying on the side of the platform; replace some of the huge panels that have fallen from the soffit of the peristyle; raise up one or two sculptured blocks on the sunken lintel of the interior portal; and let the altar, re-constructed out of the fragments that strew the whole area, resume its form and its place; do this and you might then recall the god to his shrine, and summon back the priests and the votaries; they would recognise their temple, as complete, as unblemished, as lustrous with the polish of stone and the glow of light, as on the day it issued from the hands of the architect.

The dimensions of the temple are one hundred and ninety-two feet in length by ninety-six in breadth: it was formerly surrounded by a peristyle of Corinthian columns, the shafts alone of which were forty-five feet high, and five feet in diameter. They consisted each of three pieces of stone (like the great columns) so admirably fitted together, that not so much space can be found vacant between them as would admit the point of a fine penknife. The north and south sides were ornamented by fourteen of these magnificent

* Lamartine. The author of "Three Weeks in Palestine," says, "I have seen nothing in Italy that surpasses it; indeed, I may say, nothing that equals it."

pillars, of which nine on the north and four on the south are standing; the west end by eight, of which the three most southerly are perfect, the next four broken, and the last towards the north are prostrate. There is also on the south side part of the shaft of a fifth leaning against the side of the temple, and which in falling beat in one of the stones and broke in two, and yet so strongly were the pieces composing it held together by the iron rivet in the centre, that they remained unaffected by the concussion, and the fracture took effect on the solid stone of the shaft.

The frieze, cornice, &c., are most beautiful. The soffit of the peristyle is concave, and the lacunari or panels are sculptured in imitation of net-work, a series of large busts and mythological designs running down the centre, each in the middle of a large diamond, and smaller busts occupying the angles formed by the interlacing compartments—a most intricate and

Grand Gateway of the Temple of the Sun at Baalbec.

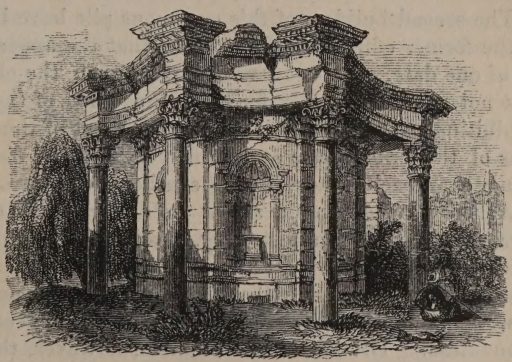
indescribable design, but very beautiful. Some of these blocks lie unbroken on the ground; they measure sixteen feet square, and are nearly five feet thick. "On one of them," says Maundrell, "there was a Ganymede, and

the eagle flying away with him, so lively done, that it excellently represented the sense of that verse in Martial—

'Illæsum timidis unguibus hæsit onus.'"

Of the portico, four columns only remain perfect—those at the south-east angle. It consisted of two rows of columns, all fluted, except the last two on either side belonging to the peristyle. The frieze and cornice above these four columns are most beautiful; a battlemented tower has been built over them by the Saracens, who have also most barbarously raised a huge wall directly in front of the great gate of the temple (8). Creeping over heaps of ruins through a low gateway, we find ourselves before this matchless portal; every ornament that could be introduced into Corinthian architecture is lavished on it, and yet it is perfectly light and graceful. Its width is twenty-two feet; it is composed of nine great stones, six forming the sides, and three the top; each must be some tons weight. The keystone has slipped partly through, and hangs ominously over one's head as he passes under it. A crested eagle is carved on the soffit, holding in his talons what has been called the caduceus, and the ribbons in his beak flowing towards a winged genius, who holds a wreath of flowers and fruits; his brother, once to be seen to the right of the eagle, is defaced.

The injuries the temple has sustained have most of them resulted from barbarian violence: the columns especially have been destroyed for the sake of the iron bars by which they were held together. But the tottering condition of this beautiful portal has been produced by a concussion more destructive than even the mutilating hand of the Muslim—the tremendous earthquake of 1750. The keystone had sunk eight inches in Volney's time; it has continued to descend, and is now more than three feet below its original position; the least new shock will bring it to the ground, and with it the whole architrave. "The ornaments of this doorway," says Lord Lindsay, "are exquisitely delicate, especially the ears of corn and the grapes and vine leaves: it was not till a second or a third visit that we discovered the little elves or genii lurking among the leaves in the lower compartments formed by the intertwining vine. The rolling frieze, the cornice, the surviving scroll, I have no words to express their beauty."



Octagon Temple at Baalbec.

About 150 yards from the south-east angle of the Temple of the Sun, there is a beautiful little Corinthian temple, circular within and without, and pierced externally with handsome niches, each flanked by two columns, so as to

give the building the appearance of an octagon. Wreaths are gracefully suspended from the cornice over each niche. A more elegant little edifice I have seldom seen. Earthquakes have sadly shaken it, and four pillars only are standing. A weeping willow bends over it, like Beauty mourning over Genius. This building was used in Pococke's time as a Christian church.

Beautiful as are the structures we have described, and replete as they are with interest and delight for any person pretending to the slightest taste for works of art, they yield as objects of wonder to the wall which encircles them, or rather upon which they stand, for their base is nearly on a level with its top. The site of the ruins is nearly a dead level, on which has been reared a platform a thousand feet long, six hundred broad, and varying in height from fifteen to thirty feet. This prodigious mass of masonry is wholly composed of huge cut stones, many of which are nine paces long, ten feet broad, and six feet thick; and three of them are more than double that length. They are cut with the bevelled edge, exactly like the cutting of the stones in the subterraneous columns of the Haram Shereef in Jerusalem, which Dr. Richardson considered to be of Jewish workmanship; and he thinks it highly probable that both structures were the work of the same people, and nearly of the same era. Among the cities enumerated in the eighth chapter of Chronicles, as being built by Solomon, is Baalath in Lebanon. The similarity of name and situation identifies it at once with Baalbec: and Baalath is mentioned by Josephus as one of the places of pleasure erected by that king in Syria, on account of the temperate nature of the climate, the delicacy of the fruits, and the excellence of the air and water. It may possibly be that these are the remains of the House of the Forest of Lebanon, described in I. Kings, ch. vii. as formed of "costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws within and without, even from the foundation to the coping, *and so on the outside towards the great court*, and the foundation was of costly stones, *even great stones*, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits." *

The second builders of this enormous pile have built upon the foundations of the former edifice; and, in order that the appearance of the whole might be of one date, they cut a new surface upon the old stones. This operation has not been completely finished, and some of the stones remain half cut, exhibiting part of the old surface, and part of the new, so that the different eras of the building are exemplified in the same stone. Three of the blocks lying near each other in the southern wall are so enormous, that early travellers seemed almost afraid to declare their dimensions. One of them measures sixty-seven feet long, nearly fourteen feet broad, and nine feet thick; the others do not differ much from it in size. These are, perhaps, the most ponderous masses that human hands or machinery ever moved into a wall; and here they are between twenty and thirty feet above the foundation. Dr. Richardson doubts, however, that they formed any part of the original wall; they do not harmonise with that which is around them, and the part below them is the repaired not the original wall. He supposes that they were lowered to the present position by the workmen who found

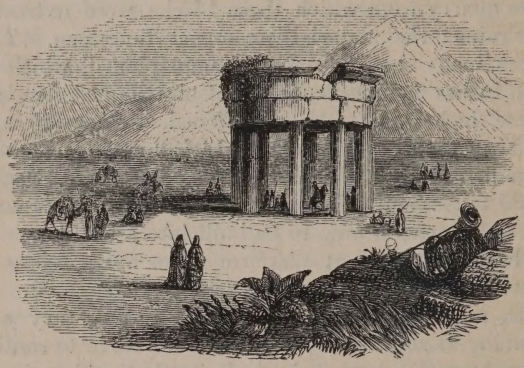
* Three weeks in Palestine.

them lying useless on the top of the platform; and Lord Lindsay, who adopts this conjecture, imagines that they may have been the intended material for three pillars of the great temple; no trace of which or even of their bases he could discover. But here we are met by another puzzling difficulty. The existing columns are in three several pieces, whilst these stones are alone of a size sufficient each for the construction of a whole one. The quarry from which these blocks were extracted, is about a mile from the ruins; the material is compact limestone. There is now lying in it a block ready shaped, smoothed and planed, which measures sixty-nine feet two inches in length, twelve feet ten inches in breadth, and thirteen feet three inches in thickness. Wood, the architect, who saw this stone in 1751, computes it to contain 14,128 cubic feet, and to weigh, supposing its specific gravity to be the same as that of Portland stone, 2,270,000 lbs., or 1135 tons: and this stone was hewn out by manual labour, and prepared to be transported a mile to be built into a wall!

Beneath the great platform there are spacious vaulted passages of very massive architecture, and beautifully constructed. Two of them run parallel with each other from east to west, and they are connected by a third running at right angles to them from north to south. They are now used as store-houses and granaries. Beneath the Temple of the Sun there are also subterranean chambers, with flights of steps leading down to them from the interior of the temple: they are lighted from above or by openings in the side of the platform. What was the original destination of these chambers it is now impossible to tell; but the Arabs, who ascribe the whole structure to the great magician, Solomon, and the jins who wrought his behests, imagine them to be depositaries for treasure. Indeed, it is a universal belief among the Turks and Arabs, that every great mass of ruins lies over mighty heaps of treasure; nor can they be persuaded that Europeans visit them for any other purpose than that of carrying off the spoil. The huge structures of Baalbec were reared by the power of cabalistic words; and the Franks, who are known to be great magicians, can uplift them by their spells, and possess themselves of what lies beneath them. Nay, there are natives too who might exercise this forbidden power, if their admirable conscientiousness did not forbid them to do so. "One of our Arab friends," says Madame Lamartine, "a man of good information and judgment, has frequently assured us, with every possible mark of internal conviction, that a sheikh of Lebanon possessed the secret of the magic words that had been employed in primitive times to move the gigantic blocks of Baalbec, but that he was too good a Christian ever to make use of them, or to divulge them." When questioned on the subject at Baalbec, Burckhardt made answer, "The treasures of this country are not beneath the earth: they come from God, and are above the surface of the earth. Work your fields and sow them; and you will find the greatest treasure in an abundant harvest."—"By your life" (a common oath) "truth comes from your lips," was the reply.

About half-an-hour's walk west of the ruins stand eight stumpy columns of Egyptian granite, highly polished, and for the most part without a scratch on them. The texture of the stone is particularly beautiful, the feldspath and quartz being mixed with the hornblende in large masses. The

red feldspath predominates: one of the columns is distinguished from the rest by its green quartz. How came they here? How could masses of rock three feet in diameter, and fifteen feet long, be brought over Mount Lebanon, which a man unloaded finds it so toilsome to cross? That it is true Egyptian granite all who know that rock will at once admit: no such rock is found in Syria. The pillars support a very clumsy superstructure of calcareous stone, the fallen roof of which covers the floor. The building is probably the tomb of some sheikh.



Supposed Muslim Tomb.

Baalbec made a noble defence against Abou Obeidah, the lieutenant of the Caliph Omar; and under the Ommiades too it was very powerful. Now it is a wretched village, little more than a heap of rubbish; the population of 5000, which it contained in 1751, has dwindled down to barely 200, and the day may not be far distant when the jackal and the hyæna shall be undisputed occupiers of the deserted ruins. Yet Baalbec possesses a fruitful soil, and abundant water, but the curse of misrule blights all its natural advantages.

CHAPTER XX.

Route from Latakiah to Antakiah.—Suadeah.—The Turkmans.—Scanderoon.—Payass.—Cuchuk Ali.

On the morning of June 2, we set out from Latakiah. For the first three hours, our route lay along an uninteresting flat near the sea, when, diverging to the eastward, we entered the defiles of Mount Casius, where the scenery was more picturesque and pleasing than any I had yet met with in Syria, though inferior in grandeur to the stern sides of Lebanon. In front and around, these mountains spring up on every side, irregular in their outline, and irregularly placed; and though not remarkable for their height, they seem to hem in the pass, and present a barrier not to be surmounted; while the path continues to wind among them with scarcely any ascent. From the summit to the foot, they are clothed with larch, oak, and fir, based upon underwood of ilex, myrtle, and cystus, that paint the landscape with their varied tints; while the vales are carpeted with flowers of gold, and eyed with the bright blue of the campanula. Through the valley which we traversed, a mountain torrent has cut its way, and so tortuous is its course,

that we crossed it many times in every mile. The devastation committed by the flood of the preceding season, was evident from the chasms that had been washed in its banks, and the trees which had been deposited far beyond them.

Ancient remains in the Bazaar of Latakiah.

Soon after mid-day we began to ascend the mountains, and the scenery becoming bolder, lost nothing of the glowing and varied richness that pervades the valleys. The oaks, untouched by man, flourished in their full vigour, and the creepers embracing their great stems, found shelter from the scorching heat beneath their leafy arms. Between the peaks of the distant mountains, the sea appeared in colour rivalling the deep azure of the heavens, and tranquil as the breeze that had lulled even the leaves to rest; and I doubt if in any country there be scenery which, for its magic and enchantment, surpasses that of the ride from Laodicea to Antioch. The road over these mountains had been made by Ibrahim Pasha for the passage of his army; but so imperfect had the work been left, that in places it was difficult, even on foot, to get forward without accident.*

We met no one on our way, nor any trace of man's existence, except now and then a rag hung on a bush by the side of the path, giving token that Muslim Santons had journeyed through these mountains. It is customary with the dervishes and half-witted saints to carry a light staff hung round with long rags of different colours; and these they sometimes detach from the staff, and hang up in their great bounty by the way-side for the benefit of any chance wanderer who may gather up these valuable relics, from which he will not fail to derive much good.† At sunset we reached a little plain of short turf, upon which we pitched the tent, notwithstanding the ground was swampy, and the dew heavy.

Our next day's journey lay continually over hills richly wooded, and brought us by evening to the village of El Ourdeh, in an elevated situation immediately by the side of the highest pinnacle of Mount Casius. On the third day we descended the north side of the mountains, the scenery still continuing woody and wild; and in the afternoon we arrived at the Orontes, and followed its banks, astonished at the beauty of the scenery. The river ran continually between two high hills, winding and turning incessantly, and at times the road led along the verge of lofty precipices, looking down perpendicularly on the water. The luxuriant variety of foliage was prodigious, and the rich green myrtle, contrasted with the dark red gravel of the road, made us imagine we were riding through pleasure grounds.

* Monro. † Poujoulat.

The laurel, laurustinus, bay-tree, fig-tree, wild vine, plane-tree, English sycamore, arbutus, dwarf oak, &c. were scattered in all directions. At times the road was overhung with rocks covered with ivy; the mouths of caverns also presented themselves, and gave a wildness to the scene; and the perpendicular cliffs jutted into the river, upwards of 300 feet high, forming small gulfs and capes, round which the waters ran in a most romantic manner. We descended at times into plains cultivated with mulberry plantations and vines, and prettily studded with picturesque cottages. The occasional shallows of the river keeping up a perpetual roaring, completed the charms of this delightful scene, which lasted about two hours, when we entered the plain of Suadeah, where the river becomes of a greater breadth, and runs in a straight line, as in a canal.*

Suadeah, where we halted for the night, is a straggling village, consisting of unconnected cottages; the village of Kepse, distant from it about three quarters of an hour, represents the ancient Seleucia, a place once of great eminence, as the remains of vast works exist to testify. Russegger speaks with great admiration of an ancient road, cut for a length of a thousand paces through the limestone rock; its breadth averages 20 feet; it is tunnelled in part, and in part open cutting, varying from 50 to 180 feet deep. The port of the ancient town was constructed by Seleucus Nicator on a scale of grandeur more adapted to the state of modern commerce than to that of the ancients. It was a land-locked basin, which communicated with the sea by a channel cut through a hill and a high chain of rocks; but this channel is now entirely closed at the mouth by accumulated sand, and within by a wall across the mouth of the basin itself, so that the latter has been converted into gardens, and an accumulation of earth has been formed, all over its interior, to a depth of several feet.

Kepse. Roadway cut in the rock.

A high, massive wall of cut stone surrounds the whole basin, and remains still in a very good state, the foundation being perfect all round, and but a

* Irby and Mangles.

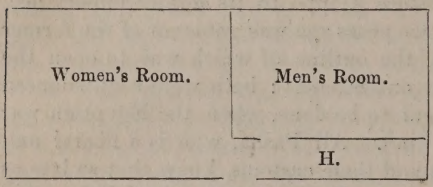
little of the higher parts of this extensive structure injured by time, so that it might be restored with much facility.* This was one of the projects contemplated by the English engineers of the Euphrates' expedition: but what is still more remarkable, the scheme suggested itself originally to the mind of a Turkish pasha. Anxious to restore Aleppo to its former importance, Ali Pasha of Bagdad, who ten or eleven years ago was governor of the former city, submitted a plan to the Sultan, the outline of which was to open the navigation of the Euphrates and clear out Seleucia: both were countenanced by the Porte, and something was about to be done, when the Egyptian war put an end to all enterprises of the kind. Ali Pasha, who is a liberal and enlightened Turk, fond of Europeans and their customs, knew that so late as the time of Saladin the port of Bir on the Euphrates contained 300 or 400 small vessels, and without any further knowledge of the state of the river, he built on this circumstance alone the hope that by restoring the ancient port of Souedia he would attract a great commerce to Aleppo, not only from the East, but also from the West. His engineer's estimate of the necessary expense of completely restoring the port of Seleucia was 5000 purses of 500 piastres each, or about £31,000; and as the whole space could not be required at least for many years, it was proposed to carry on the work by instalments, and it was thought that an expenditure of £10,000 would make the harbour available to a remunerative extent.

In this north-western corner of Syria, we meet with a new race of people, of whom we have seen no specimens in the more southern regions. These are the Turkmans, a nomade people, whose head-quarters are in the plain of Antioch, but numbers of them who have adopted settled habits are to be found dispersed over the country as far as to the coast. They bear a much better reputation among their neighbours than either the Koords or the Bedouins, being less given to plunder, and quite as generous and hospitable. Another favourable characteristic is the cleanliness of their persons and dwellings—a remarkable peculiarity indeed in Syria.

The Ryhanlu (this is the name of the tribe to which belong almost all the Syrian Turkmans) appear in their winter-quarters, in the plain of Antioch, at the end of September, and departing thence towards the middle of April, when the flies of the plain begin to torment their horses and cattle, they pass the hottest months in the mountains. These winter habitations in the hilly districts are erected on the declivities, so as by their position to be somewhat sheltered from the northern winds. Sometimes five or six families live together on one spot in as many tents; but usually tents of single families are met with at one or two miles distance from each other. In proportion to the arable land which the hilly parts contain, these districts are better peopled than the plain, where a thousand tents are scattered over an extent of the most fertile country, of at least five hundred square miles. The habitations of these nomades are of course very simply constructed: an oblong quadrangle of loose stones, about four feet high, is covered over with a black cloth made of goats' hair, which is supported by a dozen or more posts, so that in the middle the covering is elevated about nine feet from the

* Col. Chesney. Evidence before the Select Committee on Steam Navigation to India.

ground. A stone partition is built across the tent, near the entrance: I found in every tent that the women uniformly had possession of the larger chamber to the left of the door; the smaller room on the right hand is appropriated to the men; and there is also a partition at H, which generally serves as a stable for the favourite horse of the master, or of one of his sons. The rest of the horses and the cattle are kept in caverns, which abound in these calcareous hills, or in smaller huts built on purpose. Besides those who live in tents, many of the Turkmans, especially in the plain, live in large huts, fifteen feet high, built and distributed like the tents, but having, instead of a tent covering, a roof of rushes, which grow in abundance on the banks of the Afrin.



Length from 20 to 30 yards.

The women's room serves also as the kitchen; there they work at their looms, and strangers never enter; unless when, as I was told, the Turkmans meaning to do great honour to a guest allow him a corner of the harem to sleep in quiet among the women. The men's apartment is covered with carpets, which serve as beds to strangers, and to the unmarried members of the family; the married people rètire into the harem. The Turkmans have also a kind of portable tent made of wood like a round bird-cage, which they cover with large carpets of white wool; it is the exclusive habitation of the ladies, and is only met with in families who are possessed of large property. The tent or hut of a Turkman is always surrounded by three or four others, in which the Fellah families live, who cultivate his land. The Turkmans find the necessary seed, and receive in return half the produce, which is collected by a few of them who remain for this purpose in the winter quarters all the year round.

The manner of living of the Turkmans is luxurious for a nomade people, though they taste flesh only on extraordinary occasions, such as a circumcision, a nightly feast during the ramazan, or the arrival of strangers. Their fare is rice, eggs, honey, dried fruits, sour goats' milk called leben, and the never-failing bourgoul, which is a favourite dish all over Syria: this is made of wheat boiled and afterwards dried in the sun in sufficient quantity for a year's consumption; the grain is reboiled with butter or oil, and affords a very palatable nourishment. Their bread is a thin unleavened cake, which the women bake immediately before dinner on a hot iron plate in less than a minute. The Turkmans are great coxcombs at table, in comparison with other Levantines; instead of merely using his fingers, the Turkman twists his thin bread very adroitly into a kind of spoon, which he swallows along with the morsel taken up in it out of the dish. I remember sitting with a dozen of them round a basin of sour milk, which we despatched in a few minutes, without any person except myself having in the least soiled his fingers. The floor of the men's room is furnished with divans or sofas, leaving only a space in the middle, where a large fire is continually kept up to cheer the company and to make coffee, of which they consume large quantities. The servants, who pound it in wooden mortars, are very adroit in the

use of the pestle, and if two or three are pounding together they keep time, and make a kind of music which seems to be very pleasing to their masters.

The Turkman women do not hide themselves even before strangers; but the girls seldom enter the men's room, though they are permitted to talk freely with their father's guests. I was much struck with the elegance of their shapes and the regularity of their features. Their complexion is as fair as that of European women; as they advance in age the sun browns them a little. As to their morals, chastity becomes a necessary virtue, when even a kiss is punished with death by the father or brother of the offender. I could mention several instances of the extreme severity of the Turkmans in this respect, but one may suffice. Three brothers, riding through an insulated valley, met their sister receiving the innocent caresses of her lover. By a common impulse they all three discharged their fire-arms upon her, and left their fallen victim on the ground, while the lover escaped unhurt. My host, Mohammed Ali, upon being informed of the murder, sent his servant to bring the body to his tent, that the jackals might not devour it; and the women were undressing and washing the body to commit it to the grave, when a slight breathing convinced them that the vital spark was not yet extinguished: in short, the girl recovered. She was no sooner out of immediate danger, than one of Ali's sons repaired to the tent of his friends, the three brothers, who sat sullen and silent round the fire, grieving over the loss of their sister. The young man saluted them and said, "I am come to ask you, in my father's name, for the body of your sister; my family wishes to bury her." He had no sooner finished, than the brothers rose, crying out, "If she was dead you would not have asked for her; you would have taken the body without our permission." Then, seizing their arms, they were hurrying out of the tent in pursuit of the still living victim; but Ali's son opposed their brutal intentions with all the weight of his father's authority, and his own reputation for courage; he swore he would kill the first who should leave the tent; told them that they had sufficiently revenged the injury they had received; and that if their sister was not dead, it was the visible protection of the prophet that had saved her; and thus he at last persuaded them to grant his request. The girl was nursed for three months in Ali's family, and was married after her recovery to the young man who had caused her misfortune.

Notwithstanding such severity, the young Turkmans boast of their intrigues, and delight in all the dangers of secret courtship; and I have been assured, on indisputable authority, that there are few men among them who have not thus endangered their own lives, and those of their mistresses. If the woman happens to become a mother, she has no resource but infanticide.

The Turkman ladies dress in the common style of Syrian women; the men in that of the Turks of Anatolia. The latter are indolent, but the women are very laborious; besides the care of housekeeping, they work the tent-coverings of goats' hair, and the woollen carpets which are inferior only to those of Persian manufacture. Their looms are of primitive simplicity; they do not use a shuttle, but pass the woof with their hands. They seem to have made great progress in the art of dyeing; their colours are beautiful. Indigo and cochineal, which they purchase at Aleppo, give them their blue

and red dyes, but the ingredients of all the others, especially of a brilliant green, are herbs which they gather in the mountains of Armenia; the dyeing process is kept by them as a national secret.

It is only within the present century that the Ryhanlu have begun to till the land; and still their principal riches consist in cattle. Their horses are inferior to those of the Bedouins, but are well adapted for the mountains. Their necks are shorter and thicker than those of the Arab horses, the head larger, the whole frame more clumsy. Contrary to the practice of the Arabs, the Turkmans ride males exclusively.

Though the Turkman breed of horses is inferior to the Arab in beauty, it is much prized by many Syrians for its serviceable qualities in war. It is spirited, of great hardiness and bottom; but the most precious quality of the Turkman horse, according to the Syrians, is the admirable instinct with which it seconds its rider in the fight, and itself takes an active part against the horse of his foe.

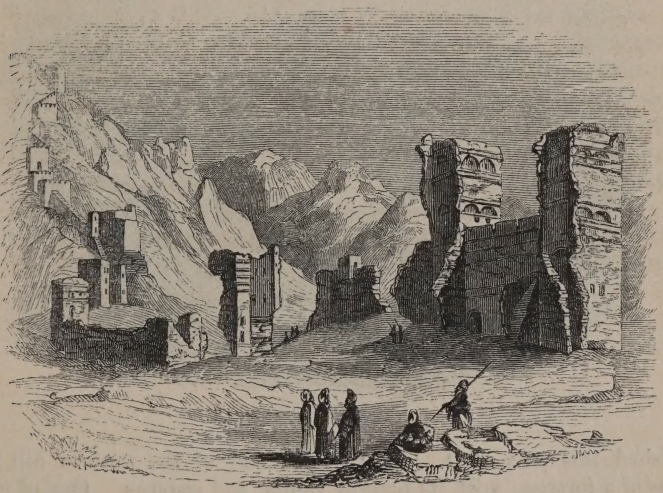
"A man is lightning on the *kehl* of the Arab; but he has three lives and a lance of fire on the horse of the Turkman," is the proud boast of the latter. It is by no means the case that all the horses of the Turkman tribes are of this highly prized class; for proof of an animal's pedigree is jealously required before its master can assume the right of adorning its forehead with a few black plumes, the distinguishing mark of high blood.

A few leagues north of Palmyra, in the desert plain that lies between the ruins and the Euphrates, the traveller discovers a small monument erected in memory of a celebrated mare of this race. She had saved her master's life when his tribe was routed in action, having outstripped all her pursuers, though herself mortally wounded. The grateful tribe built her cairn on the spot where the faithful creature fell breathless, and the Arabs themselves respect, and carefully preserve the monument. To this day, whenever the Turkman hordes pass the tomb of the gallant mare, which they call *Turkmaniyeh*, whoever among them happens to be mounted on an animal of the same breed, receives a small present from each of his companions. The women and children delight in adorning the favourite with plumes and ribbons. A proverbial saying has grown out of this custom: whenever they wish to extol the merits of a gallant steed, they compliment the rider by saying, I will give you the present of the *Turkmaniyeh*.

The great tribes of Turkmans are often at war with each other, as well as with the Koords, with whom they are in contact in many places. These wars seldom cause the death of more than three or four individuals, after which peace is concluded. The Turkmans observe the *tar* or blood revenge, as well among themselves as with respect to foreigners. They have a particular species of *tar* which I never heard of among the Arabs. It attaches to their goods: the following incident will explain it. A caravan of Turkman camels, laden with wood, was seized in the winter of 1809 just before the gates of Aleppo by a detachment of Karashukly (a mixed tribe of Turkmans and Arabs, who inhabit the banks of the Euphrates in the vicinity of Bir). One of the Turkmans was wounded, the loads were thrown down, and fifty camels driven away worth about five hundred piastres a piece. The Turkmans immediately despatched an old Arab woman as ambassadress

to their enemies, to treat for the restoration of their camels, and she succeeded in recovering them at the rate of one hundred and sixty piastres a piece, or eight thousand for the whole. "Thus," I was told by a Turkman chief, "the *tar* between us will not be for the whole sum of twenty-five thousand piastres, the real value of the camels, but only for the sum of eight thousand piastres, for which we shall on the first opportunity take our revenge." *

Suadeah is five hours and a half south-west of Antakiah, and the road



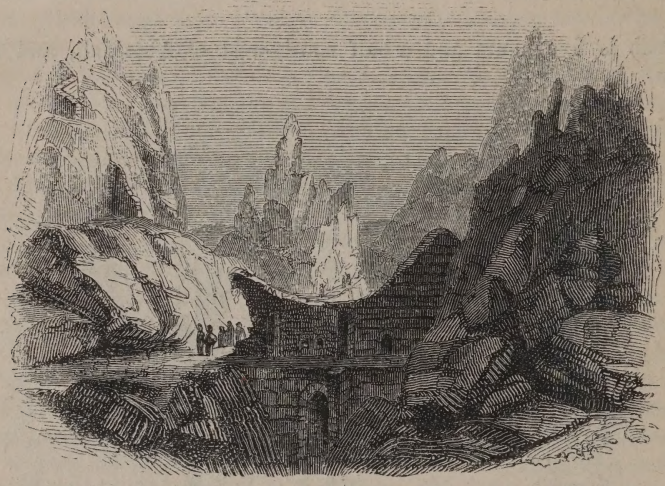
Part of the Walls of Antioch from the Town side.

between them leads through a country slightly undulated, and crossed occasionally by streams falling from the mountains. Antioch, "the queen of the East," from the splendour of its buildings and the beauty of its situation, might well deserve the dedication to Apollo which it obtained from Seleucus. But to the Christian it has yet a higher interest, as being the greatest archiepiscopal see, filled by St. Peter himself, and the place where the disciples of Christ were first emboldened to adopt the name of their divine master; from which circumstance it was called "the eye of the Eastern church," and by Justinian after he had repaired it, "Theopolis." On the south-west side of the town there is a precipitous mountain ridge, upon which a considerable portion of the old Roman wall of Antioch is still standing, of great height and thickness.

At short intervals high square towers are built up in it containing a staircase and two or three chambers, which seem to have been guard-rooms. These towers were four hundred in number, furnished with cisterns which no longer exist. The wall runs in a direct line up the steepest part of the mountain, and the top of it, in the intervals between the towers, is formed into stairs, by which the soldiers marched to and from their

* Burckhardt. Perrier.

stations, as the easiest way of communication with the citadel above; and it continues at the present time the best method of ascending the hill. The wall runs along two distinct hill-tops, separated from each other by a deep ravine, across which it was continued upon an arch for the water to pass, called the "Iron Port." But time or repeated earthquakes have nearly



The Iron Port, Antakiah.

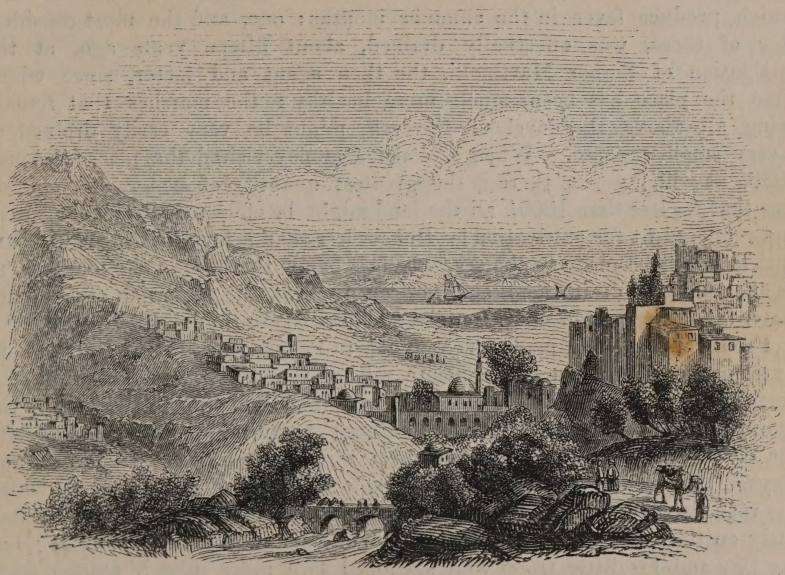
demolished this part of it. At the east end of the western hill are the remains of a fortress, with its turrets, vaults, and cisterns. One of the latter is circular, about forty-five paces in diameter, but almost entirely filled up with earth; and the substructions of two round towers still remain, which may have contained the machinery for drawing the water. The existing tradition that the Roman emperors used to navigate this basin in pleasure boats, is no doubt an invention of their Christian enemies; it is not likely that the lively and dissolute Lucius Verus, who whiled away four winters here, and spent thirty-five thousand pounds on a supper, could be satisfied with no other existing pastime than this. Towards the mountain, S.S.W. of the city, some fragments of the aqueducts remain. After heavy rains, antique marble pavements are visible in many parts of the town, and gems, cornelians, and rings are frequently found.*

On the highest part of the rocks within the fortifications, and rather nearer the west than the east side, is a most magnificent and extensive view. To the east is the great plain of Antioch, with its lake bounded by distant mountains; the Orontes winding through the plain in front of the city; the high mountains of Beilan; the sea in the south-west; Mount Casius; the irregular valley covered with vineyards behind the heights of the city: these are the chief objects which strike the beholder from the highest point of the ancient capital of Syria.

* Monro.

Antakiah stands upon scarcely one-third of the area inclosed within the ancient wall; the houses have sloping roofs, are covered with tiles, and are very slightly built—the heavy snows that often fall in this part of the country, and the frequency of earthquakes have probably taught the inhabitants to adopt this manner. The population is about 10,000. From the windows of our apartment in the consul's house, we looked out on the shallow stream of the Orontes, here headed back for the purpose of turning an enormous wheel to raise water, which was conducted by a trough to the farthest extremity of the town, and which, dripping in its passage over the streets, rendered many of them impassable except under cover of an umbrella.

June 8.—We left Antioch soon after mid-day, and passed by a bridge above the water-wheel to the right bank of the Orontes, where are some coarse substructions and low mounds, corresponding with Pliny's description of the town as being on both sides of the river. The first part of the road lay across a rich alluvial plain, extending N.N.E. of Antioch, and at the end of five hours it entered the mountains of Beilan, the ancient Amanus. A large khan, called Khan Karamont, and a small village of the same name close to it, stand at the entrance of the pass; and a little beyond is a castle, called Bagras, seated on the top of a precipice, in a most romantic situation. The town of Beilan itself hangs on either craggy side of a deep narrow



Town of Beilan.

defile, and commands a fine view of the Mediterranean and intervening country. It is one of the most agreeable places in the north of Syria.

Early next day we reached the wretched village of Alexandretta, Iskenderoon or Scanderoon, which gives the modern name to the bay at the north-east corner of the Mediterranean. The marsh, which entirely sur-

rounds Scanderoon, renders it one of the most unhealthy spots in Syria; and the scantiness of the population, together with their sallow complexions and swollen bodies, testify the pernicious influence of malaria. When our trade with the Levant flourished, Scanderoon was a depôt for merchandise to and from Aleppo, and a khan was built by the company for its reception. This building, with the wall that incloses it, occupies as much ground as the present village; and though in a very dilapidated state, several of the chambers still remain entire. The building is still called the "English Khan," and the burying ground close to it exhibits a lamentable catalogue of the names of those Englishmen who have fallen a sacrifice to the miasma. The most cursory glance at the environs of Scanderoon must discover the cause of the unhealthiness, which is entirely confined to the town and its immediate vicinity; the sea has evidently receded some distance, leaving a pebbly bank sufficient almost entirely to close the mouth of a small river, and spread out its waters over nearly the whole space up to the foot of the Beilan mountains. It is melancholy to contemplate the festering wretchedness of a spot so needful; the natural port of Aleppo—the best, the only safe harbour in Syria—standing on a noble bay, that ought to swarm with ships as thick as bees in a hive; it is sad to see it as it is, and to know that not nature so much as man's neglect has converted it into a hot-bed of pestilence and death. The only drawbacks to Alexandretta are the marshes around, which produce fever in the summer months: one, and the most considerable of these, was effectually drained, about fifteen years ago, at the instigation of Signor Martinelli, the then agent and factor, since which time the place has been much more healthy: the marshes that remain being all above the level of the sea, might be very easily drained at a very small expense. When Colonel Chesney visited the place in April, 1836, at which season there is the greatest quantity of water, his opinion was that for less than 1000*l.* all the land might be efficiently drained, cleared, and rendered fit for cultivation! But for less than a fourth part of that sum outlets might be made to the sea, which is below the beds of the marshes, so as effectually to drain them, and entirely prevent the formation of stagnant water; and they could be so contrived as to irrigate the land if required.*

From Scanderoon I made an excursion to Payass, the ancient Baiæ, about sixteen miles distant on the opposite side of the gulph, and nearly on the northern frontier of Syria; and I took with me a letter for Mustuk Bey, the commandant of the small garrison. Mount Amanus here runs parallel with the coast, and so close to it as to form midway between Scanderoon and Payass, the narrow gorge, "Pylæ Syriæ," the Gates of Syria; along which the road is shaded by myrtles, pomegranates, and vines, growing spontaneously on the mountain side. The village of Payass stands on the shore; but the Bey and his little troop were stationed two miles inland, among some gardens, skirted by the river "Carsus," where it was not easy to find his barrack. Previous to the Egyptian conquest of Syria, Mustuk had been the most merciless robber in the country. No traveller could pass without being laid under contribution, while some lost their lives; and the firman of the

* Bowring's Report.

Porte proved an inadequate protection against the lawless practices of this chief. He was now appointed (this was in 1834) to the command of a small force, whose duty it was to patrol the road between Scanderoon and Gurgula, a village eight hours to the north.

Notwithstanding this judicious appointment, a robbery had been committed sixteen days before, in a defile six hours distant; and four travellers, of whom the party consisted, had been put to death. The crime was at first supposed to have been perpetrated by the Koords; but it turned out to be the act of some men of Payass, who were detected, and executed upon the same spot. These men had no doubt been trained to their occupation by Mustuk himself; and it was hinted to me that he had been privy to and a gainer by the occurrence. But Mustuk's renown turns pale if compared with that of Cuchuk Ali, one of his predecessors, some particulars of whose history we may be allowed to relate, as illustrative of Turkish rule and discipline.*

Cuchuk Ali, in the early part of his life, was a simple bandit, inhabiting the mountains of Payass, that place being then a populous and flourishing town of trade. He laid the foundation of his subsequent power by making nocturnal excursions from the mountains to rob the gardens in the vicinity of the town. Some gardeners, in order to be exempted from these depredations, began by stipulating to pay a trifling annual tribute; others entered into similar engagements, and from a rotolo of coffee, or a few rotolos of rice, the whole town became compelled to furnish a stated contribution. Cuchuk Ali, become the leader of a band of forty or fifty robbers, now aspired to render himself master of the place. He began by waylaying the chiefs of the principal families, and in a few years he succeeded in exterminating every individual possessed of any power or influence in Payass or its vicinity. One person only of those unfortunate families, whose adherents he could neither subdue by open force, nor corrupt by bribery, for some time contended with him for supreme authority, till at length Cuchuk Ali, having lulled his suspicion of treachery by giving him his own daughter in marriage, murdered him with his own hand. After this, the murderer was often heard to warn his children of a male infant, the offspring of that marriage, counselling them to crush the crocodile in the egg, lest he should one day revenge on them the blood of his father.

Cuchuk Ali was now *de facto* governor of Payass, and soon became such *de jure*, being invested with the title of Pasha, according to the established policy of the Porte, which always legitimises the rebellion it is unable to crush. For upwards of forty years his life was a series of alternate ruptures and reconciliations with the Porte; and he kept his ground with a mere handful of men, not exceeding 200, though pashas were sent on many occasions with great forces to subdue him. In fact, notwithstanding all the disquietude this pirate and rebel occasioned the Porte, there existed between them a certain community of interest, that never allowed them to continue long on terms of open hostility. Cuchuk Ali's territorial government was such as to afford him but very slender means of drawing wealth from the

* See Letter from Mr. Barker, British Consul, in Irby and Mangles' Travels.

miserable wretches inhabiting his dominions; his revenues proceeded, therefore, in a great measure, from the casual passage of travellers through his territory, from whom he extorted such sums as he supposed they would rather submit to pay, than be obliged, by not coming to him, to take a very incommodious route. At times his natural rapacity carried him beyond the prudential limits he proposed to himself. On these occasions, the Porte would declare its displeasure, and forbid travellers to pass through Payass: the rebel then finding his coffers in want of fresh supplies, was forced to sue for pardon, nor was this long withheld, in consequence of the Porte's desire to procure a safe conduct for the grand annual caravan of pilgrims from Constantinople to Mecca. If the route by Payass had been closed against the caravan, it would have been compelled to make a very disagreeable and expensive journey through the mountains of Armenia.

Cuchuk Ali always derived a very considerable booty from the caravan whenever it entered his territory, for he taxed every individual in it according to his own caprice,—always, however, upon the system before mentioned. On its approach to Payass it was his custom to send some of his household to compliment the chief of the caravan; that distinguished personage always granted the rebel's emissaries a very flattering reception, and dismissed them with presents for their master. Horses would be among the gifts presented, and these Cuchuk Ali would send back, with a hint that they would be preferred when completely accoutred in all the usual gold and ilver trappings. This would be done accordingly; and when, after much time consumed in negotiating and stipulating the amount of tribute required, the governor's rapacity was satisfied, the caravan was permitted to proceed on its journey.

In order the better to dispose the pilgrims to submit to his extortion, Cuchuk Ali was always careful to prepare for them the spectacle of one or two impaled bodies fixed upon the gates of the town. It happened on one occasion that the prisons were empty when the caravan of Mecca was approaching Payass: the rebel was somewhat puzzled at so unusual an obstacle, and he imparted his embarrassment to a convivial companion. "The caravan," said he, "will be here to-morrow and we have not yet prepared the customary execution. Look ye, pick me out two from among my servants." His friend expostulated, and while he was endeavouring to dissuade him from his design by assuring him that everything would proceed in due order without the formality in question, Cuchuk Ali still ruminating and stroking his beard exclaimed, "I have it; go fetch Yakoob, the Christian; he has been for four months in bed sick of a fever; he can never recover." The poor wretch was instantly dragged from his bed, impaled, hung up *in terrorem*, and served to impress the pilgrims with infinitely more horror and alarm than if the bodies of ten malefactors had been exposed to view.

The miscreant was perfectly conscious of his own intrinsic weakness, and the little arts he put in practice to conceal it were characteristic and curious. Whenever a personage of distinction entered his territory, which is only accessible through vast woods, in order to deceive the new comer in an estimation of his forces, he disposed his men in the thickets so as to pass in

review like the soldiers in theatrical scenery. Thus the reports of eye-witnesses became fallacious, and the power of Cuchuk Ali was extolled and exaggerated all over the Turkish dominions.

He erected a cordon of buildings along the eminences of his mountains, which appeared from far like towers, and were even reported to be so many castles. They were in reality nothing else than little rude edifices composed of two-thirds mud, and one-third chalk, which a heavy night's rain frequently demolished. Cuchuk Ali, however, was prompt to repair them, and they long continued to inspire with dread the traveller who was compelled to approach them.

Cuchuk Ali had for many years been in habits of very close friendship with an individual who subsequently became Dutch consul at Aleppo, and there had subsisted between them an amicable interchange of gifts, according to Oriental custom; nevertheless, on the arrival of the Dutch consul at Payass, on his return from Constantinople, with an imperial firman for the exercise of his office at Aleppo, and at a period when peace subsisted between the Porte and Holland, Cuchuk Ali gave orders that the consul should be put into chains, and stript of everything but the apparel he wore. The pasha, however, avoided with great circumspection any occasion of coming to an interview with his prisoner; for it was a remarkable peculiarity in this tyrant, that, whenever he commanded any atrocity, he always kept out of sight of it, and carefully shut himself up in a solitary apartment.

The sum fixed for the consul's ransom was 25,000 piastres; but not being able to furnish more than 7500, he underwent, during the space of eight months, every species of ill treatment. All means were tried to force him to embrace the Mohammedan religion, and to extort from him the money required for his release. At one time he was confined in a damp dungeon, without light, and often without sustenance, for twenty-four hours; at another, they would threaten him with immediate execution; and once, even to show that their menaces were not wholly nugatory, two innocent wretches, who had been arrested under similar circumstances with himself, were impaled before him for having delayed, as he was informed, in producing the money for their ransom. At length, fortunately for the poor man, the arrival at Payass of a caravan from Smyrna, proceeding to Aleppo, furnished Cuchuk Ali an occasion of extorting the consul's ransom from the merchants, by obliging them to advance the money on his prisoner's bond; on their doing so, he delivered him into their hands as a slave he had sold them.

In the year 1789, Mr. Fowler, master of an English vessel in the harbour of Iskenderoon, went with four of his men to water at a place in the territory of Payass, called Jonas's Pillar, where they were seized by Cuchuk Ali, and thrown into prison. A great sum having been required for their release, before the necessary arrangements could be made for its payment, the master was driven by despair to put a period to his existence by precipitating himself from a high tower in which they were confined, and all the rest soon afterwards perished, except a boy of twelve years old, who was then sent as a present by Cuchuk Ali to the Dutch consul, who was afterwards his prisoner. No satisfaction for this act of violence was ever given by its savage perpetrator.

Two years after this, a French ship from Marseilles, richly laden with merchandise for Aleppo, was, by the captain's ignorance of the localities of the Bay of Iskenderoon, carried under the walls of Payass, where the captain with part of his crew, believing they were anchored at Alexandretta, landed in search of the consular establishment, and were conducted to the governor, who received them with every mark of hospitality. But, while he was entertaining them with a sumptuous repast, his men were occupied in taking possession of the vessel, which he immediately unloaded and sank, and sent the crew by land to the French consul at Iskenderoon. Remonstrances were made by all the European agents at Aleppo, and in a particular manner by the pasha's intimate friend the Dutch consul, to whom Cuchuk Ali replied, "My dear friend, you know very well that, consistently with the friendship subsisting between us, property and life itself are indifferent matters; nay, I swear, by God, that for your sake I would sacrifice my only son Dadah; but I entreat you not to drive me to the extremity of denying you that which it is impossible for me to grant.

"My dearest friend, place yourself in circumstances like mine. I am in disgrace with my sultan, without having given just cause for his displeasure. I am threatened to be attacked from the four quarters of the earth. I am without money; I am without means; and the ever-watchful providence of the Almighty sends me a vessel laden with merchandise. Would you lay hold of it or not? I know very well the Franks will claim restitution of their property; and that is precisely what I want, because an opportunity will then be afforded for soliciting my pardon."

On the receipt of this letter all hope of recovering anything by amicable overtures vanished. The French consul made application to his superior at Constantinople, and received several imperial commands on the subject. Three caravellas were likewise sent to Payass to enforce Cuchuk Ali's obedience. He retired to his mountains; the caravellas fired a few guns against an empty hut and a ruined fortress; and in a very short time, having consumed their stock of provisions, they gladly accepted such as were tendered them by Cuchuk Ali, who soon obtained, through the customary means of liberal presents of French watches and fine French cloths, the good will of the commanders of the expedition sent against him. Such was the effect of the rebel's munificence, that they became his zealous friends, and interceded with the Porte on his behalf with such good effect that the dignity of an additional tail was conferred on him, with a fresh order *pro formâ* for the restitution of the property. In compliance with that order, Cuchuk Ali wrote to the French consul at Aleppo, that he was ready to obey the commands of the Sultan; but that the cargo of the ship in question having been converted into use, he offered in compensation, as an equivalent, to make over to the proprietors of the goods—sundry plantations belonging to him in the territory of Payass!

For forty years this execrable villain maintained his position, baffling all the efforts that were made against him. The hour of retribution came at last. The Porte fitted out an expedition against him which took Payass and reduced it to a mass of ruins, in which state it was found by Mr. Kinneir in 1813.

CHAPTER XXI.

GROVE OF DAPHNE.—ALEPPO.—ALMSHOUSE FOR CATS.—FIELD SPORTS.

ANTIQUARIANS are not fully agreed as to the site of the voluptuous Groves of Daphne, which were planted near Antioch by Seleucus, the Syrian monarch, and which proved so fatal to the Roman veterans. In the "Jerusalem Itinerary," the Palace of Daphne is placed five miles from Antioch on the way to Latakiah, and at this distance the traveller, after passing along the foot of the mountains, through groves of myrtles and mulberry trees, arrives at a place called Beit-el-Ma, "the House of the Water." It is a small natural amphitheatre on the declivity of the mountains, where the springs burst with a loud noise from the earth, and running in a variety of directions for a distance of about two hundred yards, terminate in two beautiful cascades, which fall into the valley of the Orontes. The largest of the fountains rises from under a vertical rock, forming a small abyss or concavity, on the top and sides of which are the massive remains of an ancient edifice, perhaps those of the Temple of Apollo. A considerable portion of the water of this spring is conveyed for nearly two miles through an artificial subterraneous aqueduct, which I was told had been traced to the vicinity of Antioch.

Beit-el-Ma.

About seven miles from the city, in the same direction, there is another delightful spot called Babylæ. It exhibits vestiges of many buildings bathed by a number of fountains, which boil up from amongst the rocks, and flowing in different channels through a meadow shaded with luxuriant bay-trees, walnut-trees, and groves of myrtle, soon afterwards unite and form a small river called the Kara Sou, which enters the Orontes, about half-way between

Antioch and Suadiah. Both these places, as well as Zoiba, another copious fountain about a mile south-east of Antioch, may have been included in the celebrated grove, which was ten miles in circuit.*

Daphne was the same with respect to Antioch as Baiæ was to Rome, and Canopus to Alexandria—a place of resort for amusement and voluptuous indulgence. The senses were gratified with harmonious sounds and aromatic odours; beautiful were the walks, and shades, and grottoes; beautiful the Syrian women, by whom they were haunted: at last, all who had any fortitude or virtue, avoided the place. The soldier and the philosopher shunned its temptations. Nevertheless, the groves of Daphne continued for many years to attract the veneration, and to be the resort of natives and strangers; the privileges of the sacred ground were enlarged by the munificence of succeeding emperors; and every generation added new ornaments to the splendour of the temple. At last, the Christians of Antioch built a magnificent church here to Babylas, bishop of that city, who died in the persecution of Decius; the rites began thenceforth to be neglected, and the priest of Apollo to forsake the place. Julian the Apostate endeavoured to revive the love of Paganism amidst the groves of Daphne. He visited the neglected altars, and resumed the sacrifices, and saw, with mortification and anguish, that their reign was over, that their sun was going down, and that the mysterious voice had gone forth in Daphne, as in the temples of Greece, "Let us go hence." One night the temple was discovered to be in flames; the statue of Apollo was consumed to ashes, as also were the altars. Julian said that the malice of the Christians had caused the conflagration; the Christians said it was the vengeance of God.†

The road from Antioch to Aleppo passes through the ancient gate now

Bab Boulos, Antakiah, from the Interior.

called Bab Boulos, or Paul's Gate, which lies about half-a-mile from the

* Pococke. Capt. Kinneir. † Caine.

modern Antakiah. Immediately within the gate there is a clear spring of excellent water, shaded with trees; and when we have said this, it is almost superfluous to add, that a Turkish estaminet is to be found on the spot. Four miles further on, the Orontes is crossed by a bridge called Gesr-el-Hadeed, or the Iron Bridge. On our way thither, the Turkish guide pointed out to us a rising ground, surmounted by the ruins of a mediæval fortress. "Under that rising-ground you see yonder," he said, "there is a lake with banks all glittering with diamonds and heaps of gold; there is a boat on the lake, and Muslims, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews may enter it, and row up and down the lake, but if they attempted to reach the shore, in order to gather up the diamonds and the gold, the boat would stand motionless on the water: none but the Franks could succeed in laying hand on those treasures, for the Franks are demons, to whom all things are permitted by Allah." *

From Bab Boulos to Gesr-el-Hadeed the road lies over uncultivated plains, which are bounded to the north by mountains, with a view of Aggi Dengis, or the Lake of Antioch, at their foot. The last glimpse we had of

View of Antakiah from the Aleppo road.

Antioch is represented in the annexed cut. Our day's journey ended at Bourkee, the site of a Roman town of considerable dimensions, the ancient sepulchral caves of which are cut in the side of the mountains, and serve the present natives for habitations. We took up our abode in the ruins of an old mill. There was nothing very cheering in the appearance of the Chalaka hills, which we crossed next day: they are a barren shapeless range, fourteen or fifteen hours across; their height not more than 600 or 800 feet. We passed many sites of ancient towns, castles, tanks, temples, &c., all of the Lower Empire, and very uninteresting. Beyond these hills lies the plain of Alaks, supposed to be that in which Aurelian first defeated Zenobia. There

* Corresp. d'Orient.

are some villages in the eastern part of the plain, and the land round them was well cultivated with corn, beans, and melons; while in the more unfrequented parts we noticed small herds of gazelles, which were always beforehand with us in making observations, and bounded away with that lively coquetry of air peculiar to their race.

Barrows, or tumuli, are visible upon various parts of the plain, either singly or in small groups. Such objects abound all over Northern Syria, on the great plains of Caramania, and in the interior of Asia Minor. On the right bank of the Nile, south of Kalet Addeh, in Nubia, similar mounds were observed, but not examined, by Burckhardt and Bruce. Munro opened one of them on the side where there was the least accumulation of sand, and he had scarcely removed eighteen inches of the surface, when he found the interior to be formed of small lumps of hardened mud evidently brought from the neighbouring Nile. That such tumuli should be the cemeteries of individual heroes, or of bodies of men who have fallen near the spots where they are found, is the most plausible hypothesis, and confirmed by numberless authorities of antiquity. The larger sort, however, of those on the Aleppine plain, appear to have had fortresses upon them; and some have even supposed that the hill on which the castle of Aleppo stands is artificial, but Dr. Russell confutes this opinion.

Haleb-al-Shahba is the name by which Aleppo is known to the natives; and from the first portion of this appellation has grown both the modern name, and that of "Chalybon," used by the Greek geographers. *Haleb* signifies in Arabic *has milked; shahba* denotes a variegated white and gray colour; and the epithet is supposed by the learned Reiske to be derived from the colour of the soil and the buildings. The popular tradition however, which it would be an insult to question, is that al-shahba, or the pied, was the name of a singular cow in the herd of the patriarch Abraham, who, on his migration to the land of Canaan, resided some time on the hill on which the castle is built. The patriarch it seems used daily to distribute milk to the poor of a neighbouring village, who used at certain hours to assemble at the foot of the hill in expectation of his bounty; and hence the remark became customary—*Ibraheem haleb al shahba*, "Abraham has milked the pied cow," which gave occasion to the names being conferred on the town subsequently built on the spot! In whatever way the city acquired the appellation *shahba*, its application is justified by the glistening white and gray appearance of the buildings as seen from a distance.

The town stands low, with nothing in the surrounding country that can add either beauty or importance to its position. The ground immediately about it is rocky and uneven, affording little produce, and none that is remarkable except a grove of pistachio nuts, said to be the only trees of that description found in Syria. The wine of Chalybonitis was formerly so choice that the Persian monarchs drank no other; but the vines have been rooted up by Mohammedan prejudice.

Besides the usual domes and minarets that impart a queenly dignity to all Oriental towns, Aleppo is protected by a vast fortress, frowning on the brow of a vast mound within the walls. It is circular in form and encom-

passed by a broad deep fosse, about half a mile in circumference, now in a great measure filled up with gardens and plantations. The mound owes its shape partly to art, the declivity being in some places faced from top to bottom with hewn stones; but for its height it is indebted to nature alone. The streets of Aleppo are wider, and the exterior walls of the houses better built than those of any other Oriental town in the vicinity of the Mediterranean. The bazaars resemble those of Damascus, and are well supplied with all the commodities of the East.

Aleppo probably first rose to importance on the destruction of Palmyra, which it succeeded as a depôt of the overland trade to India. Its position was unique so long as no other route was known to the far East than that by the desert. Owing to the commercial advantages which it enjoyed uninterruptedly for many centuries it gradually became one of the most important cities in the Ottoman dominions. It claimed to be the metropolis of Syria, and was only inferior to Constantinople and Cairo in magnitude, population, and opulence. But the discovery of a maritime passage to the sources of its wealth was the first blow to its prosperity, which has been declining ever since until very recently. Forty years ago the English traveller, Browne, estimated its population as 200,000. At present it does not exceed 80,000.

The habits and traditions of Aleppo are more commercial than those of any part of Syria. The inhabitants are fond of talking of the mercantile greatness of their forefathers, and of the many nations of the East and West with which they formerly carried on extensive transactions. But though there has been some revival, the trade of Aleppo has completely changed hands. There were formerly forty Venetian establishments in this city alone for the protection of which a representative was sent by the state of Venice, who was appointed for a few years, lived in considerable splendour, and usually retired from his mission after realising an ample fortune. It was about the year 1832 that English merchants began to establish themselves, and now there are several houses carrying on a large business both with Aleppo and the surrounding district, as well as with the ancient Mesopotamia, Persia, and the countries bordering on the Euphrates down to the Persian Gulf.

The old relations of Aleppo with England have left many traces behind them. In the houses of Aleppo one is frequently struck with the evidence of the presence of British merchants one or two centuries ago. Furniture is often found of old English manufacture, and pictures, obviously belonging to merchants of theBritish factory, very frequently are seen to decorate the houses of the native inhabitants. In the same manner, the former intercourse of Aleppo with the East Indies and China is evidenced in the large quantity of ancient China vessels, Hindoo and other ornaments, Japan ware, screens and wardrobes, with which the apartments of the Aleppines are often filled.

The local position of Aleppo is still in many respects admirable for trade. It has an abundance of warehouses, which are to be obtained at a low rental; it communicates at a distance of a few hours with the Euphrates, and its khans and coffee-houses are crowded with travellers from every part of the East. There are habits of luxury in the city itself which create a considerable demand for articles of consumption. Situated about midway between

the Desert and the Mediterranean, and being a place of convenient centralization for the various caravans from the East, it is likely to grow in wealth and influence, if commerce be allowed to establish its various ramifications, and if security of person and property give those feelings of confidence, without which all enterprise is checked and destroyed.

The low rental of houses in Aleppo would seem to offer facilities for commercial enterprise; but, on the other hand, to keep the buildings in repair is more costly than the amount paid for rent; in fact, so little is received by the owners, that the largest house-proprietor in Aleppo, and who is supposed to own nearly one-fourth of the city, is by no means an opulent man. One great source of expenditure is the gardens which cover all the roofs of the city. Seen from above, the whole town is a succession of terraces, over which is spread a rank and luxuriant vegetation, looking like an irregular plain, under which the multitudinous inhabitants circulate, the streets being all of them covered in, and lighted only by gratings from above. Looked at from the terraces, Aleppo appears a subterranean city, whose noises scarcely penetrate through the superincumbent bed of earth. It is easy to walk from one end of the city to the other over the streets and over the houses, there being generally wooden steps or ladders which enable the wanderer to ascend or descend from one range of terraces to the other.*

The inhabitants frequently assemble and hold *soirées* here during the heat of summer; and when the plague exists in the town, the lower doors of the houses are barred, to prevent all ingress from the street, and the intercourse is confined exclusively to these *high* roads. As I was wandering about upon the house-tops one day with an English resident, and peeping down on the harems, monkeries, and other menageries of interest, we met with a mule that had been turned out to take his pastime among the thistles and grass, of which there was only a moderate crop.† So easy a passage from one house to another as these terraces afford, would in some countries prove an irresistible temptation to housebreaking, and, in fact, robberies are sometimes, though very seldom, committed in that way. As to illicit achievements of another kind, a prevalent notion that leaping over the parapet of a neighbour's terrace is not less ignominious than breaking open his house, joined to the chance of discovery by persons either on the same or some adjacent terrace, proves a better defence against gallantry, at least by this channel, than the height of the wall.‡

The conspicuous situation of Aleppo makes it the resort of multitudes of sea-birds. If you go after dinner on the terraces of the houses, and make a motion as of throwing bread, numerous flocks of birds will instantly fly round you, though at first you could not discover one. They float aloft in the air, beyond the reach of human sight, and drop down in a moment to seize the morsels of bread the inhabitants frequently amuse themselves by throwing to them§. The experiment is an interesting one, as exemplifying the telescopic vision of birds, and confirming the opinion of physiologists, that the flocks of ravens, vultures, and other devourers of carrion, that often appear with such surprising suddenness hovering over a fallen carcass, are guided to their prey, not by scent, but by sight. If the mere motion of the

* Bowring. † Monro. ‡ Russell. § Volney.

hand can bring the birds of Aleppo down from their invisible height, the fact affords a strong presumption against their being directed on other occasions by the sense of smell alone.

The ceremonies accompanying the introduction of a stranger to the consuls at this place are sufficiently preposterous. Scarcely is he arrived in the town when he is informed what is expected of him on this head, as if it were a matter of paramount importance among his social duties. Of the representatives of the great European powers that of Austria is first in rank, consequently to him the first visit is due; next in precedence is France, then our own country, and so on with the rest. Should the traveller be so unfortunate as to bungle in these minutiæ of etiquette, he would never hear the end of it so long as he remained in the town. But this is not all. As soon as the stranger has finished his round of visits, which necessarily take up several days, he is bound to wait at home as many more to receive the visits of the consuls in return, on which occasions their Excellencies make their appearance in full uniform, preceded by a janissary with a silver headed stick, and followed by the cancelliere, dragoman, and a host of scribes.

The air of Aleppo is very dry and piercing, but at the same time salutary for all who have not a tendency to pulmonary disorders. The city, however, and its environs are subject to a singular endemic disease of the skin, called by the people of the country *habeb-el-seneh* (ulcer of a year), and by the Europeans, the pimple or button of Aleppo. The disease makes its appearance as an inflamed pimple as big as a pin's head, which goes on enlarging and suppurating for nine or ten months. In about a year from the first breaking out of the pimple a scab forms of the size of a nail, and this falling off leaves an indelible scar, with which almost all the inhabitants are disfigured. The disease never occurs twice to the same individual; it attacks all parts of the body indiscriminately, but its most usual seat is the end of the nose, the cheek, or the forehead. It is alleged that every stranger who resides three months in Aleppo is sure to be visited sooner or later by the *habeb-el-seneh*. An English traveller named Hamilton is said to have had it in London eighteen years after he quitted Syria; and M. Baptistin Poujoulat tells us, that though he resided only a month in Aleppo and its environs, three pimples showed themselves on his person four months after he left the town, one on each wrist, and one on his right elbow.

The natives make use of no remedies to cure the pimple, they endure its visitations with resignation and even with complacency, regarding it as a salutary effort of nature, and as a preservative against other maladies. Indeed, as custom has so large a share in determining men's notions of the beautiful, who knows what charms the beaux and belles of Aleppo may discover lurking in each other's caverned faces? The cause of the malady is unknown. The people themselves attribute it to the water they drink; but this conjecture can hardly be admitted, since the pimple is endemic not only in Aleppo, but also in Aïntab, in Horeroun Kala, a village twelve leagues north of that town, in several towns of the Diarbekar, and in certain districts near Damascus.

Hajji Baba, it will be recollected, was attacked at Bagdad by a disorder from which few residents there, native or foreign, are exempt, "which, termi-

nating by a large pimple, as it dries up leaves an indelible mark on the skin. To my great mortification," he says, "it broke out on the middle of my right cheek, immediately upon the confines of the beard, and there left its baneful print, destroying some of the most favourite of my hairs, and making that appear a broken and irregular waste which before might be likened to a highly cultivated slope."

Europeans rarely pass their first summer in the East without suffering from ulcerations, which, though of trifling importance compared with the Aleppo button, are yet by no means desirable attendants in travelling. These in most cases break out on the legs; and the fellahs of Egypt are very subject to them. They began to show themselves on me soon after leaving Damascus, and increased so rapidly that when I reached Aleppo my shins, from the knee to the instep, were richly embossed, and became so painful that it was necessary to cut out the entire front of my boots, as it would have been impossible otherwise to move about.

Having left an introductory letter at the Roman Catholic convent for the superior, who was asleep, I visited an institution of a similar description for cats—except that celibacy and sexual separation form no part of their statutes. It was near to the former, and the fights and flirtations of this feline community were a scandal in the eyes of the good Franciscans, who were said to consider the cats most lax in their discipline. They had amounted to five hundred, but the plague in the preceding year had reduced their number to two hundred. This order was endowed by some pious Mussulman, and an old mosque, with its court, had been given up to their use. So liberal are the provisions of the endowment, that cats, whether of Mohammedan or Christian education, are equally entitled to admission; neither are the benefits confined to worn-out or broken-down cats, but any one who has a favourite cat, or a cat that steals cream, or any dying person wishing to provide for a cat, sends it to this *hôtel*, where it is taken care of for life. Many of them were basking upon their grassy divan when I visited them, others had gone out to promenade upon the house-tops; and having deposited a small sum as bucksheesh, I took my leave, highly gratified at having witnessed so wise, pious, and useful an appropriation of property. There is an extensive manufactory of cat-gut in the suburbs of the city.

The superstitious esteem lavished upon cats by Mohammedans is derived from the partiality of the Prophet for one of these creatures. They relate that it chanced upon a day when he was sleeping his cat kittened in the sleeve of his abbas; and in order that his favourite might not be disturbed, he cut off the sleeve and left her in possession of the bed she had chosen.

The multitude of dogs lying about the streets of Aleppo is quite terrific. At every ten steps one or more is met with, and frequently with a litter of whelps near them. They have no masters, though regularly fed by the person at whose door chance gave them birth. From this post once taken up they never stir till the day of their deaths, nor does any stranger dog ever attempt to dispossess them. During the day, being generally asleep, they are little noticed; but at nightfall, when they begin to quarrel over their offal, their yelling is troublesome beyond description. At this hour should an inhabitant incautiously venture out without a light and unarmed,

he might become the victim of their ferocity; and it would not perhaps be the first time that his assailants had tasted human flesh. Their fecundity is very great, and their numbers would increase to an alarming degree were not their powers of propagation counteracted by a mortality almost equally great. It does not appear that they are often attacked with hydrophobia. They are all of one species; the same that is met with in all the large towns of the Levant.

The gardens in the environs of the town are shaded by gigantic fruit-trees of every sort, overgrowing each other, and watered by streams carried along natural or artificial channels, which diffuse their invigorating influence throughout these agreeable retreats: they are nevertheless far inferior to the gardens and waters of Damascus. The little river Koeik serves chiefly for irrigation; but for domestic purposes, the inhabitants are, in a great measure, dependent on an aqueduct, attributed to the Empress Helena, which still brings water from a distance of some miles. The destructive effects of the earthquake of 1828 are most conspicuous in the outskirts of the city, where its extreme violence is shown by the demolition of a large khan, of which scarcely one stone is left on another.

In the vast and grotesque caverns situated just outside the gates there are rope-walks, in which many persons are employed in the manufacture of cords and cables. Some of these huge recesses were formerly used as places of worship, though it is probable they were originally the quarries out of which the stones were dug for building the city. Dr. Bowring inquired of a labourer how old he supposed the caverns might be. "As old as Allah," was the reply. It seems that no rental is paid, but that any workman who chooses to take the shelter of these extensive excavations, may do so gratuitously.

To the westward of Aleppo, at the distance of about eleven miles, and three or four to the south of the village of Hanjas, there is a remarkable cavity in the earth, known to the inhabitants by the name of the Sunk Village. It is situate in a little plain, less stony and better cultivated than the country around, which is remarkably rocky and uneven, though no very high hill is in view, nearer than Sheikh Barakat, to the north-west.

This vast cavity is nearly circular, somewhat of the form of a punch-bowl, being narrower towards the bottom than at the brim, which is 1589 feet in circumference. The sides all round consist of rock, almost perpendicular, to the depth of 170 feet, after which, the cavity contracting, the rock is no longer visible, on account of the earth and small loose stones which seem to have fallen from above. The descent is continued a considerable way over the rubbish to the bottom. The rock lining this stupendous cavity is composed of several horizontal strata, each about fourteen feet thick, in the interstices of which are many holes and fissures, that afford shelter to birds, bats, and winged insects. The substance of the rock itself is composed of coral and various sea-shells, incrusted and consolidated by means of a calcareous matter, almost as white as snow, unless where it has been discoloured by the soil washed down by the rain.

It is rather an arduous enterprise to get safe to the bottom, and scarcely

to be attempted but on the eastern side, where the descent is sometimes by winding foot-paths and irregular steps in the side; at other times through holes or arches in the solid rock. Half-way down on the right hand is the entrance into a low-roofed grotto, at the further end of which are two apertures like windows, whence the prospect of the whole is striking and romantic; a variety of trees, shrubs, and plants, shooting out from the side of the precipice, or growing luxuriantly at the bottom.

There are no springs to be seen, nor any stagnant water; but, besides many large pieces of rock that have tumbled down from the sides, there are at the bottom several oblong square-hewn stones, exactly like those found among the ruins of a deserted village, which stands at a little distance from the brink of the cavity. Between these ruins and the cavity there is a very deep well or pit for corn; as likewise a grotto intended for sheep and cattle.

It does not appear whence should have arisen a notion entertained by the Franks, that this chasm was produced by an earthquake. The natives have no traditionary tale of such a kind, but regard it as a natural production as old as the creation. Its form has somewhat the resemblance of a crater: but there are no vestiges of lava or other appearances of a volcano, either in it or in the neighbouring country. Some travellers have made mention of a volcano about nine hours' distant from Scanderoon; but no European appears to have verified its existence.*

Our amusements in Aleppo were varied in the most delightful manner; sometimes we went out shooting, the gardens near the city abounding in woodcocks, &c.; twenty a-day is not thought very good sport. We coursed the gazelle and hare alternately: the greyhounds in this country are a very handsome breed, of great speed and strength. The cheapness and plenty of game is astonishing; every day we had either woodcocks or patridges, wild geese or ducks, teal, bustard, or wild turkey, jolinotes, &c., and to crown all the porcupine, which is a delicious animal, resembling both in appearance and taste the pig and the hare. The porcupines inhabit holes in the rocks, and they are so quick of hearing that it is difficult to shoot them, as they never quit their holes till dusk, and even then with the greatest circumspection; the people wait patiently for hours in the cold near the hole till the animal makes its appearance. It commits much mischief in the gardens near the city.

The natives distinguish two classes of antelopes, those of the mountain and those of the plain. The former is the more beautifully formed. Its back and neck are of a dark brown colour, and it bounds with surprising agility. The latter is of a much lighter hue; its limbs are not so neatly turned; and it is neither so strong nor so nimble: both, however, are so fleet that the best greyhound cannot without the aid of the falcon come up with them in soft and deep, or in hilly and broken ground. The coursing of the gazelle is practised in the following manner:—

The sportsmen muster in a strong body on horseback at sunrise, and arrange themselves in a single line to beat the plain at the foot of the mountains. Relays of dogs, accompanied by some men on horseback, are usually

* Russell. Nat. Hist. of Aleppo.

sent on beforehand to various points, in order to intercept the gazelles in their retreat to the mountains, and drive them back to the plain. The main body soon come in view of a herd; the animals cease feeding, and erecting their graceful necks to their full height, gaze anxiously on the horsemen, who continue their advance cautiously and in silence. The moment the gazelles perceive the dogs, they bound away, casting from time to time a look behind; the dogs are slipped; the gazelles lay their horns backward almost on their shoulders, and flee with incredible swiftness; the horsemen pursue, and away goes the whole chase like the wind. There is no doubling or winding; but the pace is for some minutes a straightforward gallop, as fast as the excited horses, that seem to love the sport with no less ardour than their riders, can sweep over the ground. The greyhounds soon gain on the game; the panting gazelle gradually loses strength, and its bounds, at first prodigious, become less and less agile, till at last, after a run of some five or six minutes, the poor animal is pulled down by the dogs, groaning piteously, and with big tears rolling from its large black eyes.

In places where the character of the ground favours the escape of the gazelle, hawks are successfully employed to embarrass the animal in its flight and enable the dogs to come up with it. The hawk fastens on the head of the gazelle, beats it with its wings and pecks out its eyes. To train the bird to this service, it is accustomed always to take its food out of the eye-sockets of a stuffed gazelle, which is fixed on a frame and made to slide along in a groove to imitate the flight of the living animal.

The flesh of the gazelle during the winter or sporting season is well flavoured but very lean; in the spring it is rarely met with, but is then fat, and of a flavour that might even vie with English venison. The animal when taken alive (except when old) soon becomes familiar, and will approach people at meals: it is often observed snuffing up the tobacco smoke, which is purposely blown in its face; but this is not peculiar to it, for the same thing has been noticed in sheep and goats. The food of the gazelle is so pure, that according to Turner the natives of Tripoli, where they abound, gather up the dung and burn it on the top of their pipes by way of pastiles.

The boar is hunted by a numerous field of horsemen armed with long light spears, with exceedingly sharp points. Peasants beat the maize grounds, and drive the boars into the plain where the horsemen are posted. The moment the boars make their appearance the hunters surround them and single out the oldest and strongest of the herd: the nearest rider, standing up in his stirrups, buries his spear in the boar's body, and, hastily snatching back his weapon, wheels his horse round to escape the desperate charge of the infuriated beast. All the field repeat the blow in rapid succession, riding up to the boar and striking their spears into him. For a while the persecuted animal wheels round and round on the same spot, grunting and foaming with rage and pain, confused by the numbers of his assailants, and uncertain on which of them he shall fasten for revenge. At last his choice is made; he dashes at one of the horsemen, and never ceases to pursue him while there is a breath of life in his body. Now is the most intensely interesting crisis of the sport: now must the hunter, become in his

turn the hunted, urge all the speed of his good horse; he must have a quick eye and a ready bridle-hand to elude by rapid turns the deadly impetuosity of his pursuer; and his comrades must ride gallantly and strike stoutly and surely to second his flight, for never is he safe till the boar falls on the ground a lifeless mass of gore.

It is remarked that hunters mounted on white or gray horses are usually the objects thus singled out for vengeance by the boar. If the animal succeeds in overtaking an inexpert rider, the latter often falls a victim, and his horse almost always, the boar ripping its belly open with a thrust of his tusks.

Ungainly as the boar may appear, his great strength and speed often enable him to baffle the hunters. "As we approached a Bedouin camp on our way to Palmyra," says Captain Mangles, "we beheld a very animated and busy scene; the girls were singing, and the children busied in running down the young partridges* with dogs, as they were yet only able to fly a short distance at a time. Presently we heard a hue and cry from all quarters, and soon perceived a large wild boar, with his bristles erect, beset by all the dogs, everybody running eagerly to the pursuit. He was found behind one of the tents; they chased him all through the camp, and two Arabs on horseback with spears soon joined in the pursuit. The animal, however, kept both men and dogs at bay, and finally got off with only one wound."

Boars are found in all parts of Syria; but the places where they most abound are the marshy parts of the plain of Acre. When Turks are the hunters, and when they have killed the unclean beast, they dismount gravely, purify the bloody points of their spears in the fire, and go home well pleased with their work, satisfied that they have done a meritorious and pious deed. The boar is an animal only dangerous when at bay, and one in whom appetite does not overcome the natural avoidance of man. Other formidable wild beasts are far less frequently met with in Syria, though it is said that their numbers increased considerably after the general disarming of the natives by the Egyptian invaders. The monks of Carmel, for instance, were afraid, four years ago, to leave the convent after dark, lest they should become food for panthers. The bear is nearly extinct, and the lion wholly so, in the land in which they executed the judgments of God on the disobedient prophet and the scorners of his servants. Wolves are never heard of. A species of panther still comes up from the swelling of the Jordan. This animal, called in Arabic, *el fad*, is trained by the Druses of the Haouran to the pursuit of the gazelle.

A Muslim seldom uses a gun for the destruction of game, not that he is prohibited from doing so by any express precept of his religion; but it is forbidden him to eat of the flesh of an animal from which the blood has not been thoroughly discharged, and this can hardly be done with animals killed by the gun: some Christians, Druses, and Metualis are, therefore, almost the only sportsmen who use fire-arms. Hares as well as boars are classed among unclean animals: their mere touch defiles the Muslim; and a Turk would no more put their loathed flesh within his lips, than an Englishman

* For the King of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. 1 Samuel, xxvi. 20.

would dine off a toad. But the Bedouins are less scrupulous: they are very adroit in bringing down the animal with a short stick which they throw at it, and when they have "caught their hare" they proceed to dress it in the following manner. A hole is dug in the ground and filled with such dry brush-wood as the desert affords, and upon this, when thoroughly kindled, the hare is laid, without any preparation or even removing the entrails. When the fire has ceased blazing, the earth, which had been dug out and heaped round the edges of the hole, being now thoroughly heated is raked over the hare, which is left thus covered up until sufficiently roasted. Its own gravy and a little salt compose the sauce; and the dish is said by those who have tasted it to be excellent. By the law of the Prophet, hunting is allowable only for the sake of procuring food, or to obtain the skin of an animal, or for the purpose of destroying noxious and unclean beasts. Amusement is certainly in general the main object of the Muslim huntsman; but he does not with this view endeavour to prolong the chase; on the contrary, as he hunts for the pot he does all he can to take the game as quickly as possible; for this purpose nets are often employed, and the hunting party forming what is called the circle of the chase (hhalkat es seyd) surround the spot on which the game is found.

On the eastern frontiers of Syria there are several places called *mussiade* allotted for the hunting of gazelles. An open space in the plain, of about one mile and a half square, is enclosed on three sides by a wall of loose stones, too high for the gazelles to leap over. In different parts of this wall gaps are purposely left, and near each gap a ditch is made on the outside. The enclosed space is situated near some rivulet or spring, to which in summer the gazelles resort. When the hunting is to begin, many peasants assemble, and watch till they see a herd of gazelles advancing from a distance towards the enclosure, into which they drive them: the gazelles, frightened by the shout of these people and the discharge of fire-arms, endeavour to leap over the wall, but can only effect this at the gaps, where they fall into the ditch outside and are easily taken, sometimes by hundreds. The chief of the herd always leaps first: the others follow him one by one. The gazelles thus taken are immediately killed, and their flesh is sold to the Arabs and neighbouring fellahs. Several villages share in the profits of every mussiade or hunting party, the principal of which are near Karietein, Hassia, and Homs. Of the gazelle's skin a kind of parchment is made, used for covering the small drum or *tabl*, with which the Syrians accompany some musical instruments or the voice.*

* Russell. Perrier. Burckhardt. Lord F. Egerton.

CHAPTER XXII.

MARRAH.—HAMAH.—HOMS.—A BASTINADO.—THE ANSAIRIANS AND ISMEYLYS.

FROM Aleppo I prepared to travel southwards through the valley of the Orontes, and to this end I purchased a couple of Turkman horses, one for myself and the other for my servant. The manner of making a bargain for horseflesh in these parts struck me as singular. The broker employed on the occasion, after much apparent difficulty on the part of the owner to surrender the horses at the prices I was determined not to exceed (about £25 for each), brought our hands together in confirmation of our agreement. This done he picked up some earth from the ground, which he put into the hollow of my hand, closing it again with his, at the same time asking me if, in case the horses turned out to be not worth more than the earth I held, I was willing to abide by the bargain. As I had been allowed some few days' trial I assented.*

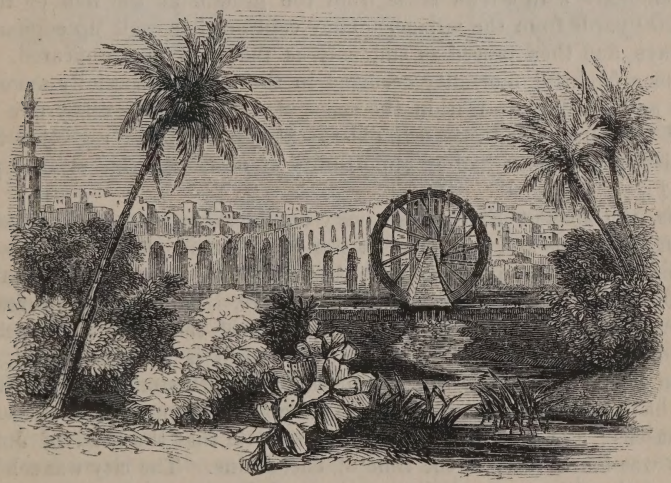
Junction of a confluent with the Orontes.

The ordinary caravan route from Aleppo to Damascus passes through Sermein, Marrah, Hamah, and Homs. Marrah is now a poor little village, but prettily situated on the brow of a hill overlooking the plain. It was a rich and flourishing city in the time of the first crusade; after its capture, such violent disputes for its possession arose between Raymond, prince of Antioch, and Bohemond, count of Toulouse, that the soldiers of the cross destroyed the city to the very foundations, in order to put an end to the quarrels between their leaders. They had already massacred the inhabitants —old men, women, and children, without mercy, reserving only the able-bodied men, and the young women, who were reduced to slavery. The long-protracted siege of Antioch, and afterwards those of the other towns of Syria, had exhausted all the resources of the country. Most of the inhabitants had fled to the mountains with their cattle; and when warlike operations were begun against Marrah, famine had reached such a frightful pass, that more than ten thousand Christians wandered about like cattle, raking the parched soil with their hands to find, if they could, a few grains of corn, or

* Robinson.

here and there a bean or a root, which they might devour. After the fall of Marrah, the pilgrims fed upon the putrefying corpses of the Saracens. The reflections made by the chroniclers on the subject are even stranger than the events they record. "Horrible and amazing to relate!" says Albert of Aix, "the Christians ate, *not only Saracens, but even cooked dogs!*" Baudry, archbishop of Dol, says that the croisés ought not to be blamed for eating Mussulmans, *because they were enduring hunger for God's cause, and because they, in such wise, continued to make war on the infidels with their hands and teeth.* Raoul de Caen tells us that the Christians boiled young Saracens, and roasted children whole on spits; and that, like wild beasts, they devoured the flesh of men; but, he remarks, "*These men were all as one as dogs.*" Lastly, Foucher of Chartres, expresses himself in the following terms:— "*The crusaders, ravening with hunger, cut the flesh from the thighs of dead Saracens, and, with cruel tooth, devoured the same* WITHOUT HAVING SUFFICIENTLY ROASTED IT."

Hamah, the ancient Epiphania, is one of the most agreeable towns in Syria: few rich merchants are found in it; but it is the residence of many



Hamah.

opulent Turkish gentlemen, who find in it all the luxuries of the large towns, at the same time that they are removed, in some measure, from the extortions of the Government. Hamah stands, on both sides of the Orontes, on the declivities of two hills, forming an oval valley, all planted with fine fruit-trees. As it is higher than the river, the water is conveyed to it by means of wheels with buckets, which discharge their contents into stone canals, supported by lofty arches. There are about a dozen of these wheels; the largest of them, called Naoura-el-Mohammed, is at least seventy feet in diameter. They make a hideous noise, which strangers find it hard to

endure with any equanimity; but if the ear is pained, there is much to delight the eye in the appearance of the great wheels, the long aqueducts, the perpetually-agitated waters—the houses, kiosques, and minarets of Hamah, intermingled with the scarlet-blossomed pomegranates, the apple, cherry, and apricot-trees of the valley. The inhabitants (about 30,000) are for the most part Muslims; they are reputed to possess much imagination—are all poets born—and have received the surname of *speaking birds.**

This city was probably the capital of the country of Hamath, the king of which, named Toi, sent presents to David, and made an alliance with him on his conquering his enemy the king of Zobah, who probably was master of the country about Palmyra† (2 Sam. viii. 9, 10). The store cities of Hamath are mentioned also with Tadmor as built by Solomon (2 Chron. viii. 4). Abulfeda, the great Arabian historian and geographer, was prince of Hamah about A.D. 1345.

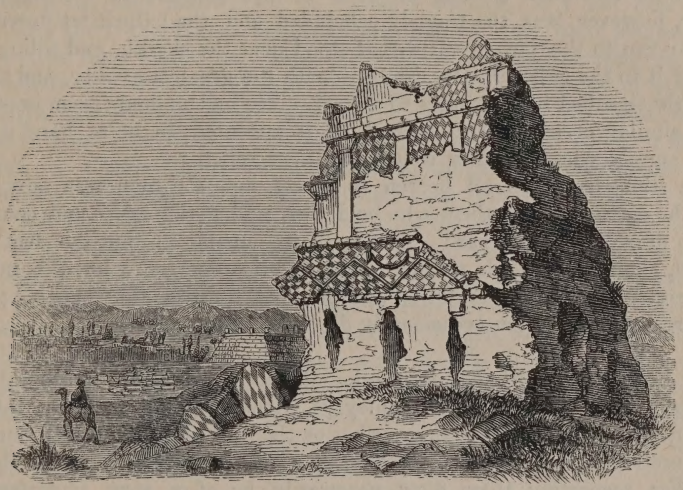
Half way between Hamah and Homs is the village of Restoun, situated on some high ground near the Orontes, which is here crossed by a fine stone bridge of several arches. A very singular phenomenon occurred here in July 1839. Floods of black mud, diffusing an intolerable sulphurous stench, burst suddenly with a loud noise from the ground at the foot of the hill, about 200 yards from the village. They continued to well up copiously for three days, and then ceased as suddenly as they had first appeared. Soon after this a frightful mortality occurred in the village, especially among the women and children. Within the space of a fortnight seventy-five out of the 211 inhabitants had ceased to exist. It is much to be regretted that no naturalist or physician had an opportunity of observing this strange phenomenon.‡

Homs, the ancient Emessa, is a very considerable town, about half-way between Damascus and Aleppo. It stands on a fine plain, and is watered by a small rivulet brought from the Aasi or Rebel river—so the Arabs call the Orontes from the impetuosity of its waters. The walls are three miles in circumference, but not more than a third of the space they enclose is occupied by the modern buildings. To the south is a large ruined castle, built on a high mound of irregular form, faced with stone. Hippocrates is said to have resided in Emessa, and to have made frequent excursions thence to Damascus; and ecclesiastical historians relate that the head of John the Baptist was found there in the time of Theodosius. The city was celebrated in ancient times for its magnificent temple, dedicated to the sun, under the title of Allah-el-Gabal, corrupted by the Greeks into Elagabalus, and that again into Heliogabalus, the surname of the atrocious Roman emperor, who was a native of this place.

About a furlong west of the town there is a curious ruin, supposed from a Greek inscription on the masonry, to be the tomb of a Roman emperor. It has suffered severely from the violence of treasure hunters, since it was seen by Pococke, who describes it as a building about forty feet square without and thirty within; the walls built after the Roman manner of bricks an inch thick, with the mortar between them of the same thickness. The casing consists of alternate rows of black and white stone about four inches

* B. Poujoulat. † Pococke. ‡ Perrier.

square, set diagonally. There are two stories each with five pilasters on every side, and each nine feet four inches high. Above these the top, now



Homs Ancient Monument.

dismantled, was built like a pyramid, but was of a conical form within. In the ceiling of the lower arched room Pococke saw some remains of fine reliefs in stucco.

Having taken charge of a letter for one of the military instructors stationed in Homs, I requested some of the numerous soldiers I found lounging in a café, to lead me to his quarters, and a drummer was directed by his officer to be my guide. As I followed the boy through the narrow crowded streets, the sounds of punishment, and the low moans of suffering, were heard proceeding from a court-yard, the gate of which was open. My little guide beckoning me to stop, entered the place, and I followed him.

Upon a raised divan of mud, in the gateway, was seated an aged sheikh, the dispenser of justice, and in the yard before him was the criminal, with his face and breast on the earth, whilst his feet, chained to a strong pole held at either end by two men, were raised to something more than a yard high, so as to expose the soles. Close at hand lay a bundle of sticks, about fifty in number, each about half-an-inch in diameter, with which three executioners were fulfilling the sentence of the judge. The sheikh, dissatisfied with the manner in which their duty was performed, frequently raised himself upon his seat, and, laying aside his pipe, threatened them with a similar punishment, unless the stripes were given with more severity. But when the spirit of his victim still remained unbroken, and his insatiate fury seemed to spend itself in vain, the acting lictors were ordered to withdraw, and others were appointed to succeed them. Yet a few low moans and short ejaculations for mercy were the only sounds which escaped the Arab's lips, though his countenance betrayed marks of extreme agony.

It was a spectacle at which the heart soon sickened, and quitting the scene I desired the drummer to attend me: but instead of heeding my request he continued looking on as if he felt pleasure in the sight. No sooner, however, was the tragedy concluded and the culprit let down, than the boy ran to the jar of water that stood near the skeikh, and filling a cup carried it to the sufferer, who drank it with the greatest avidity, and the boy instantly signified his readiness to depart. He had no doubt been present on many similar occasions, and wished, as it appeared, to be at hand that he might supply what he knew would give most relief.

The sticks had been all beaten to pieces, and the man was now raised from the earth by two others who held him under the arms and compelled him to move about the yard. He appeared unable to put his feet to the ground, though his whole weight rested on his supporters; but this measure is necessary to restore circulation and prevent mortification ensuing; those who are severely beaten occasionally die from this cause.*

We have now skirted both flanks of the mountains inhabited by the Anzeyrys or Ansairians and the Ismeylys, without having made any intimate acquaintance with those strange tribes or their abodes, which all European travellers seem very shy of approaching. The few hints therefore that we can offer respecting them must necessarily be of a very imperfect and desultory kind.

As we have already said, in speaking of the Druses, there is a manifest affinity between the general doctrines, habits, and traditions of that people and of the Ansairians; but in all the virtues of social life the advantage is greatly on the side of the Druses. The stranger may wander securely through the mountains of the latter, and reckon confidently on their hospitality; but it is far otherwise in the country of the Ansairians, who are robbers, perfidious and blood-thirsty, to the last degree. A savage and suspicious race, they live secluded in their mountain fastnesses, rarely descending into the plains, except for purposes of plunder, or when they are furnished with a *teskereh* or safe conduct from the governors of the towns.

A report having got abroad that Ibrahim Pasha intended making a forced conscription among the Anzeyrys, they all took the alarm, and fled to their fastnesses, in the mountains. The troops that were sent out as a press-gang to seize them returned with very few—the attempt was a failure. Upon this the wily Ibrahim set his trap, and used these few for the bait. He inquired who they were, and being told they were Ansairians he ordered them to be set free: he wanted no such men for soldiers, not he; he would have none but good Mohammedans. The liberated Ansairians scampered back merrily to their mountains and reported the good news to their brethren, who thereupon descended fearlessly from their strong holds, and were instantly pounced on by the Egyptians. The person who related the fact to our authority saw nearly a thousand of them marched into Aleppo in chains, to be drilled and trained for soldiers.

Burckhardt passed a night at an Anzeyry village named Shennyn, between Maszyad and Tripoli, and as his hosts appeared to be good-natured

* Munro.

people, he entered into conversation with them after supper, with a view to obtain some information from them respecting their religious tenets, but upon this point they maintained an extreme reserve. "I had heard," he says, "that the Anzeyrys maintained from time to time some communication with the East Indies, and that there was a temple belonging to their sect to which they occasionally sent messengers. In the course of our conversation I said I knew there were some Anzeyrys in the East Indies. They were greatly amazed at this, and inquired how I had obtained my information; and their countenances seemed to indicate that there was some truth in my assertion. They are divided into different sects, of which nothing is known except the names, viz., Kelbye, Shamsye, and Mokladjye. * * * It is a fact that they entertain the curious belief that the soul ought to quit the dying person's body by mouth; and they are extremely cautious against any accident which may prevent it from taking that road. For this reason whenever the government of Ladakie or Tripoli condemns an Anzeyry to death, his relations offer considerable sums that he may be impaled rather than hanged. I can vouch for the truth of this belief, which proves at least that they have some idea of a future state. It appears that there are Anzeyrys in Anatolia and Constantinople. Some years since a great man of this sect died in the mountain of Antioch, and the water with which his corpse had been washed was carefully put into bottles, and sent to Constantinople and Asia Minor."

The Anzeyrys pretend that they derive their name from Nassaïr, a prophet who preached the holy religion of Ali-Ebn-Abou-Thaleb. The account they give of the infusion of the deity into the person of this latter is curious enough.

The God who created the universe, they say, after having completed his work, took delight in flying through the loftiest regions of the air to contemplate his magnificent performance. He had equipped himself with splendid glistening wings, made of the azure feathers of the jay; but one day he soared so high that the winds carried away his feathers. The winds did not recognise their maker, but obeying the laws he himself had given them, they whirled him away and destroyed him in their fierce contention: but his spirit returned in the person of Ali-Ebn-Abou-Thaleb, from whom descended the twelve imans, "emanations of the breath of God," whose holy prophet was Nassaïr.

Next to Ali-Ebn-Abou-Thaleb and Nassaïr they revere a prophet or magician whom they call Iafar-el-Tayar (the Flier), who has the power of flying through the air, and another named Sheikh Halil, or the Beloved. They possess the latter's staff, which they carry as a palladium in their battles enclosed in a blue-cloth case.

Sky-blue is a sacred colour among them, and none but the initiated are allowed to use it for certain parts of their dress. Having learned that the English are not Catholics, they do us the honour to conclude that we are of the same religion as themselves. Poujoulat met an Anzeyry sheikh at the house of the French consular agent in Latakiah, and when he asked him with a smile what was his god, the sheikh answered gravely, *Ansarii, Ingliz, sava, sava*, "Anzeyrys and English, all one thing." The

Anzeyrys are great believers in magic and in the metempsychosis: one of them was in the habit of saying that he remembered to have been successively an Englishman, a goat, and a gazelle.

There is a handsome fountain of cut stone at the Ansairian village of Besnada. M. Poujoulat having stopped to drink there, was accosted by an Ansairian, who said to him—"O, Frank, the fountain of Besnada is much less abundant now than formerly: a magician passing through our village, tried to dry up our fountain; he took a cup, filled it with our water, and, going off with it a long way from here, he poured it on the ground, saying some words of power over it; and where the water fell, a spring burst forth. The magician could not quite dry up our fountain, but it is greatly diminished ever since that time." When Poujoulat asked the man who those wicked sorcerers could be that delighted in destroying the good gifts of God, and injuring his creatures, the Ansairian said they were dervishes, and *other Muslims, on whom be the curse of Allah!*

The transmigration of souls is continual: every time death occurs an Ansairian enters a new stage of purification, and returns to the world under a more and more perfect human form, till at last he is changed into a star that shines in the firmament. If he has not been faithful to his law, his religion, and his secret, then he becomes a Jew, a Mussulman, or a Christian. His transmigrations are multiplied indefinitely, until at last, like gold in the furnace, he recovers his pristine purity, and becomes worthy to assume his place in the sky. The impious and the misbelievers who shall not have adored Ali-Ebn-Abou-Thaleb shall be transformed into dogs, asses, swine, or other unclean animals.

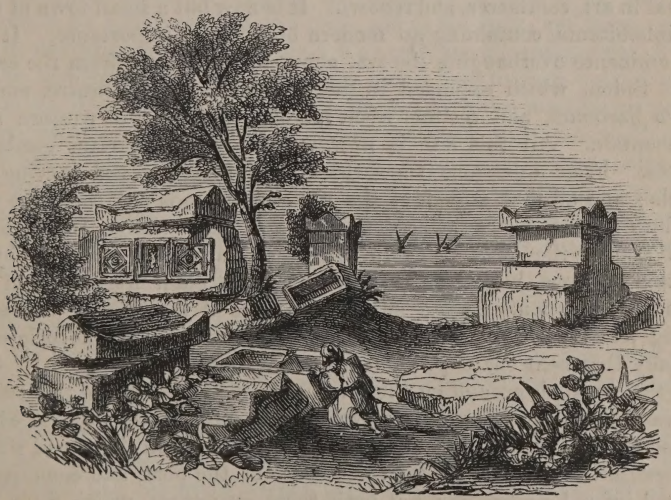
Among all the absurdities of the Anzeyry tenets there is something sweet and consoling to the heart in this notion of final transformation into a star. The mother gazes by night on the spangled heavens, and fancies she can identify the star of the child she has lost; the son searches for that of his departed father. Every one invokes with loud cries and with music the loved being he deplores. If, while their gaze is fixed on the heavens, a star shoot across its face, no doubt remains in the glad heart of the beholder: it is the soul of the departed which has thus shown itself in the lustre of its purity to cheer the spirits of its surviving kindred: a festival is held to celebrate the event, and great is the rejoicing in the family.

The Ismeylys, who, in the time of William of Tyre, possessed ten fortresses in the mountains of Tripoli, Latakiah, and Hamah, and whose numbers were 60,000, now constitute a population of about 4000, occupying some twenty villages, of which Maszyad is the chief. The castle of Maszyad is twelve hours west of Hamah, and fourteen hours east of Tortosa; it has been from ancient times the chief seat of the Ismeylys. In the year 1809 they were driven out of it by the Anzeyrys, by an act of most flagrant treachery. The Anzeyrys and Ismeylys have always been at enmity; the consequence perhaps of some religious differences; but in 1807 a tribe of the former, having quarrelled with their chief, quitted their abode in their mountains, and applied to the Emir of Maszyad for an asylum.

The latter, glad to have an opportunity of dividing the strength of his enemies, readily granted the request; and about 300, with their sheikh Mahmoud, settled at Maszyad, the Emir carrying his hospitality so far as to order several families to quit the place for the purpose of affording room for the new settlers. For several months all was tranquil, till one day, when, the greater part of the people were at work in the fields, the Anzeyrys, at a given signal, killed the Emir and his son in the castle, and then fell upon the Ismeylys, who had remained in their houses, sparing no one they could find, and plundering the whole town. On the following day the Anzeyrys were joined by great numbers of their countrymen, which proved that their pretended emigration had been a deep-laid plot; and the circumstance of its being kept secret for three months, by so great a number, serves to show the character of the people. About 300 Ismeylys perished on this occasion: the families that had escaped from the sack of the town fled to Hamah, Homs, and Tripoli; and their treacherous enemies successfully attacked three other Ismeyly castles in the mountain. The Ismeylys then implored the protection of Youssef Pasha, at that time governor of Damascus, who marched with four or five thousand men against the Anzeyrys, retook the castles which had belonged to the Ismeylys, but kept the whole of the plunder of the Anzeyrys to himself. The castle of Maszyad, with a garrison of forty men, resisted his whole army for three months.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FROM BEYROOT SOUTHWARDS.—SEYDE.—LADY HESTER STANHOPE.—LOUSTANNAU.—SOUR.

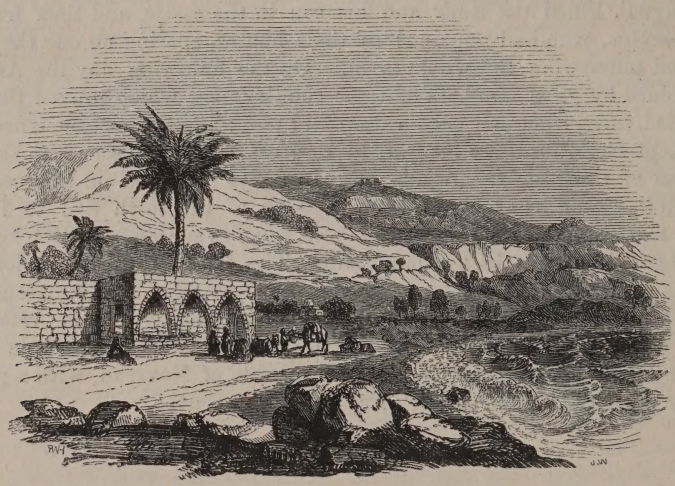


Sarcophagi on the road from Beyroot to Seyde.

SEYDE lies at the distance of ten hours from Beyroot, and may very well

* Burckhardt.

be reached in one day from the latter place; but as it is the fashion of the Arab mookres to make their first day's journey as short as possible, they generally contrive that the traveller shall stop for the night in wretched quarters at Khan Nebbi Youni—that is, the Khan of the Prophet Jonah—which is said to mark the spot where he was cast on shore by the whale.

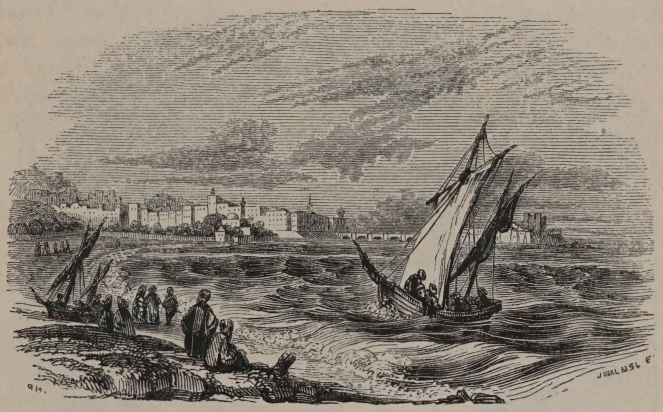


Khan Nebbi Youni.

Seyde is but a pale phantom of the ancient Sidon, the sister of Tyre, and her rival in art, commerce, and renown. It is now but a small town of 6000 or 7000 inhabitants, containing no modern building of importance. It stands on an eminence overhanging the sea, about half a league from the centre of ancient Sidon, which extended in the form of an amphitheatre, embracing the two harbours, and resting with its back against the western slope of the mountain. All this site is now covered with luxuriant gardens and orchards. From a distance it has the look of a noble forest waving on the hill side; and all that is seen of the city, as it stands out from the wooded shore into the sea, bears the aspect of a lovely rural village, the eastern side buried among the trees. These plantations are well watered by some mountain streams, which are diffused over the plain by the usual contrivances for irrigation. It is a striking instance of the efficiency of water in creating fertility under this fostering climate. Much of the original soil, especially that next the city, is mere drifting sand.

On the elevated ground on the south side of the town are the ruins of a large castle, built by Louis IX. of France, who repaired the injuries which the city had suffered during the holy wars; and on the north there was, till lately, a fortress in the sea, erected for the defence of the port, and connected with the land by a long bridge; but both these structures, which were already ruinous, received the *coup-de-grâce* from the allied fleet on the 20th of September, 1840. The harbour is now incapable of receiving vessels of any

great draught of water, having been purposely filled up by Fakr-ed-Deen in the seventeenth century, to prevent the Turkish galleys from finding shelter. The houses are solidly built of stone; a fact that would indicate the presence of some wealth and trade. These, however, have much declined within the last five-and-thirty years. Down to that period Seyde shared with Beyroot the advantage of being the sea-port of Damascus, a great part of the valuable foreign trade of which city was here carried on chiefly through the agency of French merchants. This important element of prosperity has been wholly engrossed by Beyroot, and Seyde has no longer any considerable commerce.



Seyde.

The mountain adjoining Seyde, the place of sepulture of the ancient Sidonians, is all honey-combed with cells cut in the rock, and communicating one with the other by arched doors. The cells are all rectangular, from ten to fifteen feet square, and contain three niches, one in each wall; the niche opposite the door usually exhibits sculptures in white marble surmounting the sarcophagus. Many of the cells have the walls covered with Phœnician inscriptions in bright colours. No one can enter them without being struck by the exact similarity they bear to the Egyptian catacombs, especially to those of Sakara and Alexandria. The Maronites have a small chapel in a garden at the gates of the town; and the tradition runs, that here stood the house in which Mary, the sister of Lazarus, died.

Up the mountains, about eight miles east of Seyde, is Djoun, where Lady Hester Stanhope long resided, and where she died.

She was the favourite niece of William Pitt, for whom she acted in the capacity of confidential secretary: and it is said that she had been affianced to the ill-fated Sir John Moore, who fell at Corunna. Her affections blighted, and her talents and wayward energies left without an object, by the death of the one and the other, she withdrew in disgust from European society. Her ambition, and her eccentric genius, led her to the congenial soil of Syria, where she dreamed of achieving royal state. The wild Bedouins of Palmyra gratified her with the empty title of *maleka* or queen, in return for the gold

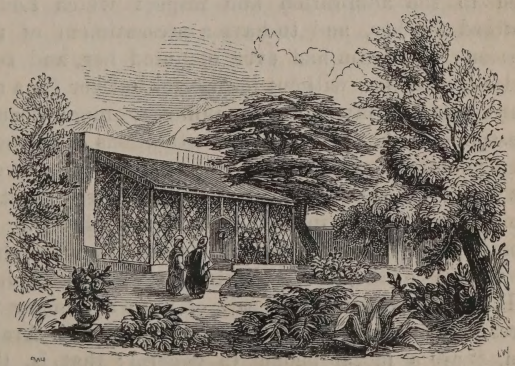
she lavished upon them ; and the romantic singularity of her character, her fearless energy, her benevolence, and, above all, her open-handed munificence, so fascinated the imaginative Arabs, that had not her pecuniary resources failed, she might perhaps at one time have produced a revolution in Syria. But before she landed in the country, she had lost, by shipwreck, a large part of her fortune, which she had converted into specie ; the remainder, improvidently husbanded, soon dwindled away ; and with it vanished her influence over the greedy race that surrounded her. She retired to the cheerless solitude of Mar Elias, an old convent, in the heart of a barren, rocky region ; and there,

Djoun the residence of Lady Hester Stanhope.

becoming her own dupe, she wholly surrendered herself to hallucinations, to which at first, perhaps, she had only affected to give credence, as a means of acquiring command over the credulous Arabs. Magic and astrology were now the themes of her constant meditations, and she fed her wild hopes on prophecies and portents. Lamartine has given us a long and detailed account of his conversation with this remarkable woman, when he visited her in 1832 ; and though he mingles not a little dilletante nonsense of his own with his narration of the lady's transcendental absurdities, some of his remarks are pertinent, and appear to be just. "It seemed to me," he says, "that the religious doctrines of Lady Hester were a clever though confused mixture of the different religions among which she had condemned herself to live ; mysterious as the Druses, whose mystic secret she, of all the world, perhaps, alone knew" [she knew nothing about it] ; "resigned as the Muslim, and like him a fatalist ; with the Jew, expecting the Messiah ; and with the Christian, professing the worship of Christ, and the practice of his charity and morality. Add to this, the fantastic colouring and supernatural dreams of an imagination tinctured with Oriental extravagance, and heated by solitude and meditation, some revelations, perhaps, of the Arab astrologers,

and you will have an idea of this compound of the sublime and the ridiculous, which it is more convenient to stigmatise as madness, than to analyse and comprehend. If I were called upon to decide, I should rather say it was the voluntary and studied madness of one who knows what she is about, and who has her own reasons for appearing insane. The sway, founded on admiration, which her genius has exercised, and still exercises, over the Arab population which surrounds her mountains, proves sufficiently that this affected madness is but a means. To the men of this land of prodigies, to these men of rocks and deserts, whose imagination is more vivid and wreathed in mist than the horizon of their sands or seas, the words of Mahomet or Lady Hester Stanhope are necessary! They require the knowledge of the stars, prophecies, miracles, the second sight of genius! Lady Hester's truly superior intellect comprehended this; and then, perhaps, like all others gifted with powerful intellectual faculties, she ended by deceiving herself, and by becoming the first neophyte of the symbol she had set up for others. * * *

"'I have only one reproach to make to you,' said I to her, 'namely, that you have been too timid in the course of events, and have not yet pushed your fortune as far as it might have conducted you.' She answered, 'You speak to me like a man who believes too much in human volition, and not sufficiently in the irresistible control of destiny alone: my power is in it. I await it, but do not invoke it. I am growing old; I have greatly lessened my fortune; I am at present alone, and abandoned to myself, upon this desert rock, a prey to the first audacious ruffian who may force my gates, surrounded by a band of faithless domestics and ungrateful slaves, who rob me every day, and sometimes threaten my life. Yet more, I owe my safety solely to this poniard, with which I have been compelled to arm myself, to guard my breast against the weapon of a black slave whom I have reared. Well, in the midst of all these tribulations, I am happy; I respond to everything by the sacred phrase of the Mussulmans, Allah Kerim! (It is the will of God!)—and I await the future of which I have spoken to you, with confidence: and I wish I could inspire you with the conviction respecting it with which you ought to be impressed.'



Garden at Djoun.

"After having smoked several pipes, and drunk several cups of coffee, which the black slaves brought every quarter of an hour, she said to me, 'Come, I will lead you into a sanctuary where I allow nothing profane to enter—my garden.' We descended to it by some

steps, and, in a positive enchantment, I followed her through one of the most beautiful Turkish gardens which I had yet seen in the East. There were arbours of vine where the light was dimmed, but on the verdant arches of which glittered the grapes of the promised land, like myriads of lustres; kiosks where the sculptured arabesques were entwined in jessamine and the climbing canes of Asia; canals, in which an artificial water came murmuring from the distance of a league and spouted up through marble jets; alleys, lined with all the fruit-trees of England, Europe, and these beautiful climates; plots of greensward, sprinkled with blossoming shrubs and marble compartments surrounding flowers new to my eyes. Such was her garden. We rested in several of the kiosks with which it was ornamented; and never did the inexhaustible conversation of Lady Hester lose the mystic tone or the elevation of style which it had assumed in the morning. 'Since destiny,' said she to me at the close, 'has sent you here, and so astonishing a sympathy in our stars permits me to confide to you what I conceal from the profane—come, and I will let your eyes behold a prodigy of nature, the destination of which is known only to myself and my scholars; the prophecies of the East had many ages ago announced it, and you will judge yourself if these prophecies are accomplished.' She opened a door of the garden, which introduced us to a small inner court, where I saw two magnificent Arabian mares, of pure race and of rare symmetry. 'Come, and look at this bay mare,' said she; 'see if nature has not accomplished in her all that is written touching the mare which is to carry the Messiah—She shall be born ready saddled.'" I saw, in fact, upon this fine animal, a sport of nature sufficiently uncommon to flatter the delusions of vulgar credulity amongst a half-barbarous people; the mare had, from a defect in the shoulders, a cavity so broad and deep, and so much in the form of a Turkish saddle, that it might be said with truth, she was born ready saddled; and save only the stirrups, she could be easily backed without the aid of an artificial saddle. The mare, a splendid animal in other respects, appeared used to the admiration and respect which Lady Hester and her slaves testified for her, and to have a presentiment of the dignity of her future mission; no person had ever mounted her, and two Arab grooms attended and watched her, without losing sight of her for a moment. Another white mare, and, in my opinion, infinitely more beautiful, partook, with the Messiah's mare, the respect and attentions of the owner. It, too, had never been mounted. Lady Hester did not tell me, but she left me to infer, that the destiny of the white mare although less sanctified, was likewise one of great mystery and importance: and I thought I understood that Lady Hester reserved her for herself, on the day when she should make her entry, by the side of the Messiah, into the reconquered Jerusalem."

But Lady Hester could talk of more sublunary matters than astral influences, occult sciences, and prophecies. "The Arabs," she said to Dr. Madden, "are a moral people in general; that is, their passions are not so strong as Europeans imagine.* The unmarried people are particularly

* Unless the word "moral" be here understood in a very restricted sense, this opinion is clearly untenable. The Arab is deficient in the most essential requisite of morality, namely, the power of self-control. He is too much the creature of impulse.—See Lane, Perrier, &c.

circumspect; yet jealousy finds its way into their tents, and an instance of it came before me very lately. An Arab suspected his wife of talking too much with strangers in his absence, and one of his neighbours confirmed him in his suspicions. He went home, proceeded to strangle the unfortunate woman, and when she became insensible, he dragged her to some distance and commenced interring her. The first heap of sand, however, which he threw on her recalled sensation; she manifested symptoms of life, and he repented of his violence: he brought her to me half dead; told the whole story of her supposed guilt, but owned that he was premature in strangling her, as he should have first got me to consult her star, to ascertain whether she deserved to die or not.

"I sent the woman into the harem, had her bled and taken care of till she recovered, and then I summoned the man before me. 'My good friend,' said I, 'your wife's star has been consulted; take her back in peace, and thank God that you have her; for it is written in the stars—On vain surmises thou shalt not strangle thy wife, neither shalt thou hearken to the slanderers of her honour; but when thy eyes behold her shame, then and then only, believe their evidence.'

"The man immediately held out his hand to his gentle rib; she kissed it, and out he walked, desiring her to follow him, with the most perfect indifference. I asked the woman if she were afraid of another act of violence. She calmly replied, 'Is he not my husband? Has he not a right to kill me if he suspects me of doing wrong?'"

Since the year 1839 the traveller who visited Seyde might see an extremely remarkable old man sitting in the sun on the mustabah at the gate of the French khan. His hair and beard were silvery white; his left hand was mutilated and always wrapped in a red handkerchief; his look and bearing were those of a warrior; and few strangers could pass by him without pausing with a sudden impulse of reverent pity before that aged and care-worn, but still noble face. This remarkable individual was general Loustannau.

He was a native of Aïdens, in the department of Basses-Pyrénées: his family was not wealthy; and his youthful ardour impelled him to seek his fortune in foreign lands. Arriving in Bordeaux for the purpose of embarking for America, he found a vessel about to sail for India with M. de Saint Lubin, who was commissioned by Louis XVI. to propose to the Mahrattas a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive against the English. Loustannau took advantage of the opportunity, gave up his American project, and in due time found himself among the Mahrattas. This was in the year 1778, when he was twenty years of age. War had for some time existed between the Mahrattas and the English, and Loustannau, who wished to take service with the former, obtained a letter of recommendation to M. Norogne, a Portuguese officer, who commanded their forces. That general received him very courteously, but thought him too young to be entrusted with any command. Loustannau, however, accompanied the army in its movements, and was witness to the continual advantages afforded the English by the unskilfulness of general Norogne. The Mahrattas, though thrice outnumbering their enemies, were constantly forced to yield their ground. At last the

rajahs succeeded in bringing the English to an engagement in a position unfavourable to the latter, inasmuch as it allowed of their being outflanked by the superior numbers of their adversaries. But this did not avail them: the English entrenched themselves on an eminence, from which their batteries committed great havoc among the Mahrattas. Loustannau, observing a height which commanded the English position, immediately mentioned the fact to Norogne, who received this communication with supercilious indifference. Stung to the quick by this contemptuous treatment, Loustannau addressed himself to a Mahratta chief through an interpreter, and with the reckless enthusiasm of youth pledged his head that he would be successful if he were given the command of a few pieces of cannon. 3000 horse and ten guns were placed under his orders: the result surpassed his hopes; and the English were driven from their position with great loss.

In spite of Norogne's jealousy, a choucadar with a gold stick was soon sent in quest of the young Frenchman who had rendered such essential service to the national cause: Loustannau was presented to the rajahs who exercised the regency, and received a magnificent present: he remained in the service of the Mahrattas, and soon had a corps of 2,000 men under his exclusive command. He took part in all the subsequent operations against the English, and was mainly instrumental in inflicting on us those losses, which for a while seemed to place our Indian establishment in such imminent jeopardy. At the battle of Chassipachrer he routed our sipahis with great slaughter: the battle was ended, only the English artillery continued to fire a few volleys in its retreat in order to protect the fugitives, when a grape shot struck Loustannau in the left hand, and carried off the four fingers and half the thumb. It was long before he recovered from the effects of this wound. When the stump was healed he had a silver hand of very ingenious workmanship fitted to it. The first day he appeared at the head of his troops, with this new kind of hand, a priest threw himself prostrate before his horse's feet, crying out that "the prophecy was fulfilled, since it was written in the temple of the god Siva, that the Mahrattas were to reach the summit of their glory under a man who should come from the far West, should have a silver hand, and prove invincible."

Loustannau was, thenceforth, looked on as something almost superhuman. Diamonds, precious stones, the richest presents of every kind were lavished on him from all sides. He was assigned a magnificent palace with all the appurtenances of royal luxury. His stables contained thirty elephants sumptuously caparisoned, and a hundred and fifty horses, the best that India could produce. His body guard consisted of 2,000 men with four pieces of cannon; and the chief rajah had two colossal silver hands planted before the entrance of the palace, that all men might know by that token that the man of destiny was the leader of the national forces.

Another campaign took place in which Loustannau was again successful, and which terminated greatly to the satisfaction of the Mahrattas. On his return to Agra he was received with honours such as were used to be conferred only on princes and sultans; and the ruling rajah solemnly proclaimed him *the Lion of the State, and the Tiger in War.*

Loustannau married the daughter of a French officer in India: he had

now been eighteen years among the Mahrattas; he had several children, and his wife urged him to return to Europe to enjoy the fruits of his toils. Notwithstanding his excessive generosity, the wealth he had accumulated was enormous; but from the moment he quitted the territory of the Mahrattas, Fortune, which till then had been so lavish to him of her favours, forsook him all at once, and the rest of his life was but one series of disasters and sorrows. He converted his whole fortune into paper; for he had not yet made up his mind where he would settle, and he did not wish to purchase any estates before his arrival. His homeward voyage was long and difficult; and he was several times in danger of shipwreck. When at last, after a seven months' passage, he reached France, the assignats had fallen into such utter depreciation, that he found the 8,000,000 of francs he had remitted home dwindled down to 220,000. This first blow made a terrible impression on a temper so violent as his, and so spoiled by prosperity: but he still possessed a considerable amount in diamonds, some of which he sold, and with the proceeds he settled in Tarbes with his family, consisting of two sons and three daughters. Shortly afterwards he lost his favourite son; and his grief was such as to occasion him an attack of insanity, from which he did not completely recover for two years. When he was restored to his senses, he set about constructing extensive iron works on the frontiers of Spain, in order to afford his restless energies an object on which to employ themselves. For three years his sole pleasure consisted in superintending his engineers and workmen, and watching the progress of the great constructions he planned.

Things were in this state when fresh misfortunes befel him. He was on the point of realising the profits of his enterprise, when the war broke out between France and Spain. Immediately upon the first disasters of the French arms his buildings were burned, his furnaces destroyed, and his hopes annihilated. The ruin of his fortune was almost complete, and he only supported himself by selling, one by one, the costly jewels he had brought from India. All these misfortunes impaired his reason; he had frequent fits of overwrought devotion, amounting at times to insanity. His family lived on in this way until 1815, in a state of mediocrity very hard to endure after their brilliant condition and their opulence in past years.

In 1815, Loustannau's only surviving son, who was a captain in the imperial guard, was dangerously wounded at Waterloo. His father saw himself on the point of losing him, and this shock seemed to restore him the possession of all his faculties. When he recovered, all the revived energies of his character were concentrated on the thought, how destitute would be the state of his family after his death: he determined, therefore, to return to India, though many years had elapsed since he left it. His son wished to go in his stead, but he would not hear of this; and in 1816 he embarked for Egypt, having raised the necessary funds for his journey by pledging a ruby of rare value, the last gift of his Mahratta patron. Not finding in Egypt an opportunity of pursuing his way by the Red Sea, he crossed over to Syria, with the intention of joining the caravan from Damascus to Bassorah; but he fell dangerously ill at Acre, his brain being again affected, he squandered away all his money in his delirium, and destroyed bills of exchange,

and other valuable papers. After this, he suffered for a while all the horrors of penury, and the renowned Loustannau, *the lion of the state, and the tiger in war*, was reduced to earn his bread as a day-labourer.

In this deplorable condition he was found by M. Catafago, a wealthy Levantine merchant, who relieved his wants, and took him into his house. Loustannau had occasionally lucid intervals, in which he talked of his past greatness, and related the history of his life and his afflictions; but he had the mortification of seeing that everything he uttered seemed to his hearers but an additional proof of his insanity. To make all sure, however, letters were written to France, requesting information respecting this extraordinary man; and at last his son, who had heard nothing of him for two years, made all haste to Syria, and found his unfortunate father almost wholly deprived of reason. His journey to India was henceforth clearly impossible. The captain had gathered together the last remnants of his fortune; and he remained for some time in Syria, doing everything that affection could suggest, in the hope of restoring his father to himself.

It was at this period that the old man's melancholy story reached the ears of Lady Hester Stanhope. She was then in the hey-day of her fame; and she offered Loustannau and his son an asylum in her house. At the first sight of the latter, she was struck by his resemblance to the gallant lover she had lost: from the lines of his hand, the form of his foot, and the aspect of the stars she gathered that the life of Captain Loustannau was destined to be inseparably connected with her own. The captain, however, had not lost sight of his Indian project: he still hoped to recover some remains of the vast property his father must have left in that country. Lady Hester dissuaded him from going to India, and undertook to employ every possible means of recovering whatever remained of the old general's fortune; but great changes had occurred since the old man had left the country. Wellesley's (Wellington's) victories had put the English in possession of a great part of the Mahratta territory; Loustannau's princely protectors were no more, and his property had passed into other hands.

It was a singular chance that brought together in a corner of Syria two beings so remarkable as General Loustannau and Lady Hester Stanhope. They had long mystical conversations together, and Lady Hester looked on Loustannau as a prophet who was come to prepare the way for her, and to be the forerunner of her triumph.

The captain sought to beguile the tedium of his existence by managing the household and the pecuniary affairs of Lady Hester. She treated him with the most assiduous kindness until his death, which happened, I believe, in 1825. Her feelings towards him were those of pure friendship, tinged by the memory of her youthful affections, and stimulated by the fantastic notion that a secret bond irrevocably united his destiny with her own. After his death she had him buried in her garden, and twice every day she visited his grave with flowers, and remained by it absorbed in long reveries.

General Loustannau's insanity became more intense after his son's death; his delusions being greatly augmented by his intercourse with Lady Hester Stanhope. Celestial music floated round him; for a while he believed himself called to give battle to Bonaparte, who he said had returned to earth

under the form of Antichrist; and in 1831 he declared it his destiny to become king of Jerusalem, when the fulness of time should have been accomplished. He had now warm altercations with Lady Hester; for he asserted his right to the bay mare with the natural saddle, whilst her ladyship was to have the white mare, and to ride with him into the holy city as his wife, her place being at his left hand and a little behind him.

Her ladyship very soon saw it written in the stars that Loustannau and herself were to part; accordingly she had a house fitted up for his reception at Abra, a village within five miles of her own residence, on the road to Seyde. But she continued her benevolent protection towards him, and did not let him want for anything requisite to his comfort.

Lady Hester died in June 1839, a few days before the battle of Nezib, which she had foretold with rather surprising accuracy. Her wealth was all gone; she even left considerable debts, and her property was instantly seized by her creditors. Loustannau being thus once more reduced to entire destitution, the French consul of Seyde took charge of him, and gave him a humble lodging in the French khan. There this venerable old man, who once possessed immense wealth, commanded great armies, and enriched multitudes of Europeans, now subsists on charity. It has long been generally supposed in Europe, that he was dead, as asserted by M. Jouy.* He is dead, it is true, to all the purposes of active life, but he has still a few lucid intervals in the midst of his harmless religious insanity. Happily for him he has almost wholly lost his memory, and of all his past greatness he recollects nothing distinctly except the title he bore in India. Often does he proudly repeat that they called him formerly *the lion of the state and the tiger in war;* and then sadly reverting to his present condition, he subjoins, "And now I am nothing but an unfortunate beggar."†

On the extreme end of a long, low, sandy peninsula, which seems to have crawled out as far as it could, stands the fallen city of Tyre, appearing at a distance to rest on the bottom of the sea. The ruins of the old church of Paulinus; some tottering walls towards the shore; a few ancient towers, that mark the time of the crusaders; a white-domed mosque; a few unconnected houses, jumbled together on this sea-washed rock; and, rising over all, some waving palms, whose plumy tops seem to mourn over the surrounding desolation, are all the objects that present themselves to the traveller, on the site of the once proud, and still celebrated, city. The modern village has almost no importance of any kind, and it is only wonderful that 3000 miserable people should have assembled on this sickly spot, instead of living in the more healthy and pleasant mountain villages.

The facility of obtaining building materials from the fields of ruins, and some advantages of fishing, were probably the chief inducements for reviving this poor shadow of Tyre. As late as the middle of the last century, it was nearly desolate, and without inhabitants. It has now a paltry trade with Egypt, chiefly in tobacco, which grows along the seashore, and in some of the neighbouring valleys; and it also exports a little wood to Beyroot, and other places along the coast. Even in this petty place there are consular

* Ermites en Province, t. i. p. 85. † Perrier, 1842.

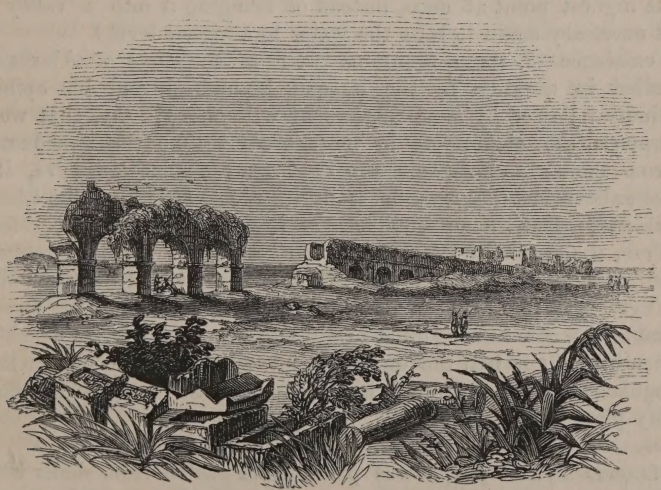
establishments, just as though there was any foreign commerce to protect. Of this there is none; but the office of consul or vice-consul is one greatly coveted in the East, on account of the privileges and immunities belonging to it. It is a singular anomaly in the Levant, that foreigners are treated with more favour than the natives. This may appear a fortunate circumstance for the Franks, but some consequences ensue from it that are highly inconvenient.

The system of consular protections is the source of great abuses in Syria, and is bitterly complained of by the European merchants: in some cases it enables the functionaries of government to secure their subordinates from the consequences of breaches of contract, and in others it allows debtors to subtract themselves from the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts, and thus to avoid the penalties they have incurred. A rude imitation of our extent of the crown exists in the Levant, and it sometimes occurs that a debtor refuses to discharge his debts on the plea of the state being his creditor, and thus, by collusion with the authorities, he avoids or delays the payment of his personal obligations. But a far more common case, and consequently a more serious grievance, is when protections are fraudulently obtained by *rayas*, or native Christians, from the consulates of the petty powers, which protections enable the holders to deny the jurisdiction of the courts of the country, and to appeal to the consular tribunals, which are frequently unable, and more frequently unwilling, to afford redress. These fraudulent protections have been long one of the sources of revenue to the consuls (particularly of the less influential states), and are used in a variety of cases for purposes of dishonesty: the legitimate claims of British merchants have often been defeated by such means. The principal governments of Europe have checked the issue of unwarranted protections by severe orders to their different consuls; but the consuls of minor states still traffic in them to a shameful extent; in fact, this traffic has hitherto been a source of considerable revenue to them; and it is said the sale of the office of vice-consuls, for the purpose of protecting the holder of the office, is carried on to a large extent; for such protection has two advantages—it enables the holder to avoid the payment of his own debts, and to enforce his own demands upon others. An English merchant of high standing in Syria assured Dr. Bowring he would willingly give a thousand pounds for a vice-consulship, though he should receive no salary, so greatly would it facilitate all his commercial transactions.

The peninsula on which stands modern Sur (the Arab name for Tyre) was an island, until Alexander built a mole from the mainland to facilitate his attack on the city. Accumulations of sand have since made this causeway an isthmus, more than a quarter of a mile in width. Palæ Tyre, the original city, was on the mainland; that which was situated on the island was at first, perhaps, only a port dependent on the former, though it afterwards became the capital of the Tyrians, when continental Tyre had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

About three miles south of Tyre is Ras el Ain (the head of the fountain), or the Cisterns of Solomon, as some call them. They are three fountains, extending in a line less than a furlong in length from east to west, and filled

to overflow with clear water, which springs as by enchantment from a flat, parched, and sandy soil. The mouth of the principal well is an octagon, each side of which is twenty-three feet three inches, the diameter therefore must be sixty-one feet. Its least height above the plain is fifteen feet. The people of the country allege that it has no bottom; but La Roque, Maundrell, and Wilde, found it at five-and-thirty feet. This vast reservoir is composed of gravel and cement, which form a wall of enormous thickness as hard and durable as rock; a part of this wall projects over the water in the form of a half-arch. The water, instead of being on a level with the surrounding country, rises up to the brink of the well, and that with such force and abundance, that after issuing from an outlet which has been broken in the western side, it forms a rivulet, turning three or four mills in its passage to the sea. The ancient outlet, now stopped up, was on the east side, over an aqueduct which communicated with the two smaller cisterns, one of which is twelve, the other twenty yards square. After receiving their contributions into its ample channel, the aqueduct turned towards the N.E., to a small rocky eminence, on which is the tomb of an Arab santon, and where, probably, stood of old the citadel of Palæ Tyre.* The aqueduct, which is the principal object on the plain, has several of its magnificent arches still perfect, and can be seen at a considerable distance at sea; and the water oozing out at breakages, or filtering through the cement, has encrusted them all over with stalactites of a peculiar form, which give them, at a little distance, the appearance of being clothed with some gigantic foliage.



Aqueduct of Tyre.

After reaching the rock the aqueduct bends off to N.W., at right angles with its former course, and proceeds along the isthmus to the insular city.

* Volney. Wilde.

Here there is a ruined tower built over a well, from which the principal suppl of water for the modern inhabitants is obtained. This tower is situated o the sandy isthmus, and the water of the well, which is pure and good, canno rise here, but is most probably conducted by some portions of an olde aqueduct which still remain pervious, but hidden beneath the sand an rubbish; and this probability is further strengthened by the fact of th water becoming troubled in the month of September, and of a reddish colou simultaneously with that of the fountains at Ras el Ain.

Two questions respecting these great water-works have much divided th learned. Whence do they derive their supply, and what was the probabl date of their construction? We made several inquiries upon this and othe points of the inhabitants of the little village which lies round and among th cisterns. One very aged man with a venerable white beard, assured us tha the water comes from Bagdad; for a bottle thrown into the parent fountai in that distant city reappeared in due time in the Cisterns of Solomon. Thi patriarch of the cisterns says that they were built by Solomon the son of Davi though the rest of the people ascribed them to Scander (Alexander) th Great.* There seems little reason to doubt but that they are natural spring gathering their waters beneath inclined strata at the foot of the hills, an then issuing with such force as to admit of their being raised to the heigh necessary for conducting it to the city; or that they are vast Artesian wel invented long before their reinvention by the moderns. To suppose them, a has been asserted, supplied by a river having a higher source in the adjacen mountains, is unreasonable; for had such been the case, why not conduct from the highest point at once, instead of bringing it into a valley only t make it necessary again to raise the water to a higher level?

The existence of these fountains prior to the time of Alexander ha been called in question by the learned Maundrell, and his opinion ha been blindly followed by most subsequent writers. He says that we canno well suppose the cisterns to be more ancient than the aqueduct whic runs from them; and as this aqueduct runs to insular Tyre, it coul not have existed before Alexander built his mole connecting the island wit the mainland. But the aqueducts are of Roman architecture, besides whic Palæ Tyre, the original city, stood on the continent; and no stronger proo is needed of the works having been constructed previously to the building insular Tyre, than that which is furnished by the aqueduct running direct to th rock, and afterwards turning off at a right angle to the island, to which it coul have been brought in half the distance, and with much less obstruction fro the irregularities of the ground, had such been the purpose of those wh originally planned the works.

The famous Tyrian purple was probably extracted from shells which th neighbouring seas throw up in great quantities in June and July; they a found at the depth of scarcely a foot under water on the sandy beach. A this period is celebrated the feast of Sheikh Marshook, whose tomb stands o the rocky eminence before mentioned. The children collect these shell which, as soon as they are withdrawn from the water, emit a slimy matter

* Travels in Egypt, &c. by Stephen Olin, D.D. New York, 1843.

pale violet colour, and with this they draw regular stripes on white cloths; hey add a little soda and lemon juice, when the linen becomes striped with he brightest colours. At the feast of Sheikh Marshook every child carries ne of these variegated banners on the end of a stick.

Mr. Wilde made a very interesting discovery connected with this subject vhile examining the remains of ancient floors and foundations along the outhern shore of what was the island. "I found," he says, "a number of ound holes cut in the solid sandstone rock, varying in size from that of an rdinary metal pot to that of a great boiler. Many of these holes were seven eet six inches in diameter, by eight feet deep; others were larger, and some vere very small. They were perfectly smooth in the inside, and many of hem were shaped exactly like a modern iron pot, broad and flat at the ottom, and narrowing towards the top. Some were found detached, and thers in a cluster; when the latter occurred, two or three of the holes were onnected by a narrow channel, cut through the stone, about a foot deep. Many of these reservoirs were filled with a breccia of shells; in other places vhere the pots were empty, this breccia lay in heaps in the neighbourhood, s well as along the shore of this part of the peninsula.

"It instantly struck me on seeing these apertures that they were the vats r mortars in which was manufactured the Tyrian dye. I am confirmed in his opinion by the fact that the species of shell discovered in this breccia orresponds exactly with that described by the old authors, as that from vhich the colour was extracted, and from which a purple dye can be btained even at the present day, and it is acknowledged as such by modern aturalists.

"Although I broke up large quantities of these masses, in no instance ould I find a single unbroken specimen, which I certainly should have ound had they been rolled in from the sea, or were they in a fossilized state. I picked up one of the recent shells upon the shore, which corresponds in very respect with those formed in the conglomerate. The stones in the vicinity of this place were covered with large serpulæ.

"The binding material of this mass is lime and a trace of strontian; and he only substances found in connection with them are a few pebbles. This ubstance is of great weight and adamantine hardness, and is of the same haracter as the petrified strand I found existing at Rhodes and in Karamania. Now it seems to me more than probable that the shells were ollected, or as they might be more properly called, mortars, in which they were pounded for the purpose of extracting from them the juice which the animal contained; and in this opinion I am borne out by Pliny the naturalist, who says that, 'when the Tyrians light upon any great purples, they take the fish out of the shells to get the blood; but the lesser they *press and grind in certain mills*, and so gather that rich humour which issueth from them.'

"These vats may have been also used for steeping the cloth: for dyeing pots, cut either in the rock or formed of baked clay sunk in the earth, are still found in many parts of the East, and may be seen in use in some of the bye-streets of Alexandria and Cairo, bearing some resemblance to our tanpits. Such places as these are still used for indigo-dyeing throughout Africa."

CHAPTER XXIV.

EXCURSION ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

DEPARTED * at five o'clock from the Wells of Solomon; marched two hours in the plain of Tyre, and arrived at night at the foot of a high perpendicular mountain on the sea, which forms the Cape of Raz-el-Abiad, or the White Cape. The moon was rising above the dark peak of Lebanon to our left, but not high enough to illumine its sides; her light fell upon some prodigious blocks of white rocks, on which it glared like a flame on marble, leaving us in the shade; these rocks, far advanced into the sea, broke the sparkling foam, and showered it over us; the dull, periodical sound of the heavy wave against the cape was heard alone, and it shook at every stroke the narrow ridge on which we were toiling, suspended upon the edge of a precipice. At a distance the sea shone like an enormous sheet of silver, and here and there some lowering cape jutted into its bosom, or a deep cavern struck into the indented sides of the mountain; the plain of Tyre stretched behind us; it was yet distinguishable by its fringes of yellow glittering sand, which marked its outlines between sea and land. Tyre was seen throwing its shadow over the extremity of the promontory, and by a chance, doubtless unusual, a light was glimmering on its ruins, which at a distance might be taken for a beacon: but it was the beacon of solitude and desolation, guiding no vessel in her course, and appearing to our eyes alone to win from them a glance of pity over its ruins. This route along the precipice, with all the varied, solemn, and sublime accompaniments of the night, the moon, and the yawning abysses, continued for about an hour—one of the hours the most strongly imprinted on my memory that God has permitted me to contemplate on earth! A sublime portal for to-morrow's entry into the land of miracles!—into that land of testimony, yet all-impressed with the traces of the old and new dispensations from God to man!

On descending from the heights of this cape, we had the same view which had struck us on scaling them; precipices equally lofty, sonorous, whitened with foam, and diversified with vast ledges of living rock, yawned beneath our feet and before our eyes; the sea broke with the same ringing echo which accompanied us the whole length of the stormy coast of Syria, as the ancient Hebrew poets call it; the moon, further advanced in the firmament, lighted up more vividly this scene, at once tumultuous and solitary. The vast plain of Ptolemais stretched before us. It was nine o'clock, on an October evening; our horses, exhausted by a journey of thirteen hours, slowly dragged their feet over the sharp and shining rocks, which form the only roads in Syria, irregular stepping-stones on which we should not dare to risk any animal in Europe; we ourselves, overcome with weariness, and overawed with the grandeur of the spectacle and the imperishable recollections of the day, walked in silence on foot, holding our horses by the bridle,

* Lamartine.

and casting our eyes sometimes upon that sea which we had to cross, to behold again our own rivers and our own mountains, and sometimes on the black and lofty peak of Mount Carmel, which began to be delineated on the remotest skirts of the horizon. We arrived at a species of khan, that is to say, at a little house, half destroyed, where a poor Arab cultivates some figs and gourds in the clefts of the rocks, beside a fountain.

Between the plain of Tyre and the foot of the mountains, water begins to get scarce; the fountains are from five to six hours' distance from each other; and often when you arrive, you only find in the bed of the spring a dry and heated trough, which bears the foot-marks of the camels and goats which have last drunk at it.

Next day we struck our tents by the light of a thousand stars, which were reflected in the waves stretched at our feet. We descended for yet an hour, the last declivities of which form the Cape of Raz-el-Abiad, and we entered the plain of Acre, the ancient Ptolemais.

The recent siege of Acre by Ibrahim Pasha had reduced the town to a heap of ruins, under which ten or twelve thousand slain were buried, with myriads of camels. Ibrahim, being victorious, was eager to place his important conquest beyond the reach of fortune, and immediately began to rebuild the walls and houses of Acre. Every day, hundreds of dead bodies, half consumed, were dug out of the ruins; the putrid exhalations, the heaps of corpses, had corrupted the air of the whole plain. We passed as far as possible from the walls, and proceeded until mid-day, halting at the Arab village of the Waters of Acre, in an orchard of pomegranates, figs, and mulberries, close to the mills of the Pasha. At five o'clock we resumed our march, to reach an encampment, in an olive wood, on the top of the first hills of Galilee.

Commencing our march with the first dawn of day, we cleared a hill planted with olives and holly-oaks, scattered in groups, or decreased to briars under the browsing teeth of goats and camels. When we were on the other side of the hill, the Holy Land, the land of Canaan, appeared in all its extent before us. It was a grand, lovely, and imposing prospect. It was not that naked, rocky, and sterile land, that hive of mean and scraggy mountains, which is pictured to us as the promised land on the credit of prejudiced writers, or of travellers hurried in their descriptions, who, of the immense and varied domains of the twelve tribes, have only perceived the rocky path which leads from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Deceived by them, I expected only what they described, namely, a confined country, void of plains, trees, and water; a land encumbered with white or gray hillocks, where the Arab robber conceals himself in the shade of ravines to despoil passengers. Such is perhaps the route from Jerusalem to Jaffa. But here was Judea, such as we beheld it, the first day, from the heights which skirt the plain of Ptolemais, such as we afterwards found it on the other side of the hills of Zabulon, beside Nazareth, and at the foot of the Mounts Hermon and Carmel; such as we traversed it throughout its breadth, and in all its variety, from the eminences which command Tyre and Sidon, as far as Lake Tiberias, and from Mount Tabor to the hills of Samaria and Naplous, and from there to the very walls of Sion. First before us was the plain of Zabulon; we were

standing between two gentle rising undulations, scarcely fit to be designated as hills; the hollow between them diving before us formed the road we had to follow. This road was marked by the traces of camels which have trod its dust for four thousand years, and by the broad deep holes which their heavy feet, always falling on the same spot, have worn in the chalky and brittle rock, that continues invariably the same from the Tyrian Cape to the first sands of the Lybian desert. To our right and to our left, the round sides of the two hills were shaded every twenty steps by thickets of varied shrubs, which never lose their leaves; a little further, trees with knotty trunks and strong, interwoven branches, spread their motionless and sombre foliage. The greater part were holm-oaks of a particular species, the stem of which is thinner and straighter than the European oaks, and their velvety circular leaves are not notched like those of the common oak. The carob, the turpentine-trees, and more rarely the palm and sycamore, contributed to the clothing of these hills. I am not acquainted with the name of the other trees: some had the foliage of pines and cedars; others, and they were the most beautiful, resembled immense willows in the colour of their bark, the beauty of their foliage, and the delicate yellow tints of their leaves; but they far surpassed them in extent, growth and elevation. The most numerous caravans can collect around their colossal trunks, and encamp with their camels and baggage beneath their shade. In the wide and frequent spaces which these different trees left naked on the sides of the hills, ridges of whitish, or oftener of bluish-grey rock, stood out from the soil, like the vigorous muscles of a strong-built human frame, which grow more prominent in advanced age, and seem as if they would pierce the skin that covers them; but between these ridges or blocks of rock, a black, light, and deep soil throws up a constant vegetation, and would produce wheat, barley, and maize with the slightest husbandry, instead of forests of thorny brambles, wild pomegranates, Jericho roses, and prodigious thistles, the stems of which rise as high as the head of a camel. When you see one of these hills such as I have described, you have seen them all, so far as form is concerned; and the imagination can picture their effect when they occur in descriptions of the scenery of the Holy Land. We journeyed then between two of these hills, and we began again a gentle descent, leaving the sea and the plain of Ptolemais behind us, when we perceived the first plain in the land of Canaan—it was the plain of Zabulon, the garden of the tribe of that name.

Before us, on both sides, the two hills which we had just traversed separated in graceful and similar curves, like two exhausted waves, which gently sink and divide in unison before the prow of a vessel. The space which intervened between them, and which gradually enlarged, seemed like a creek, which the plain hollowed in the mountains; this creek, or gulf of level and fertile land, soon expanded into a larger valley; and where the two hills, which still skirted it, absolutely died away, the valley stretched out into an almost oval plain, the two sharp extremities of which sank under the shadow of two other rows of hills. This plain might be, as we conjectured, a league and a half broad, and three or four leagues long. From the height on which we were placed, at the opening of the hills of Acre, our

eyes fell naturally upon it, involuntarily followed its waving sinuosities, and penetrated the narrowest hollows which it scooped in the roots of the mountains which bounded it. On the left, the lofty, gilded, and indented tops of Lebanon cast their pyramidal forms on the dark blue of the morning sky; on the right, the hill on which we stood rose insensibly as it left us, and, joining itself as it were to other hills, formed divers elevated groups, of which some were arid and fruitless, and others were covered with olives and figs bearing on their summits a Turkish village, the white minaret of which contrasted strongly with the dark colonnade of cypresses, which almost everywhere envelopes the Moslim mosque. In front of us, the horizon which bounded the plain of Zabulon, stretching three or four leagues before us, formed a perspective of hills, mountains, and valleys, of sky, light, shade, and vapours, arranged in such a harmonious colouring and outline, cast in such happy composition, linked in such graceful proportions, and varied with effects so different, that I could not draw my eyes away; and, finding nothing in my recollections of the Alps, of Italy, or of Greece, to which I could compare this magical blending, I exclaimed, "It is a Poussin, or a Claude Lorrain!" Nothing in fact could equal the majestic sweetness of this prospect of Canaan, but the pencil of the two painters to whom the divine genius of Nature has revealed her beauties. We shall only find this concourse of the grand and the soft, the energetic and the graceful, the picturesque and the rich, in the imaginary landscapes of these two great men, or in the inimitable country which we had before us, and which the hand of the great and supreme master had himself designed and coloured for the habitation of a pastoral and innocent people. At the foot of the mountains, about half a league in the plain, an eminence, entirely detached from the surrounding hills, rose from the ground like a natural pedestal, intended by nature to bear a fortified town. Its sides rose almost perpendicularly from the level of the plain to the very summit of this mountain-altar; they resembled exactly the ramparts of a fortification, traced and erected by the hands of men. The summit itself, instead of being uneven and round, like the tops of all the other hills and mountains, was levelled and flat, as if on purpose to bear something with which it should be crowned, when the people came for whose abode it was destined.

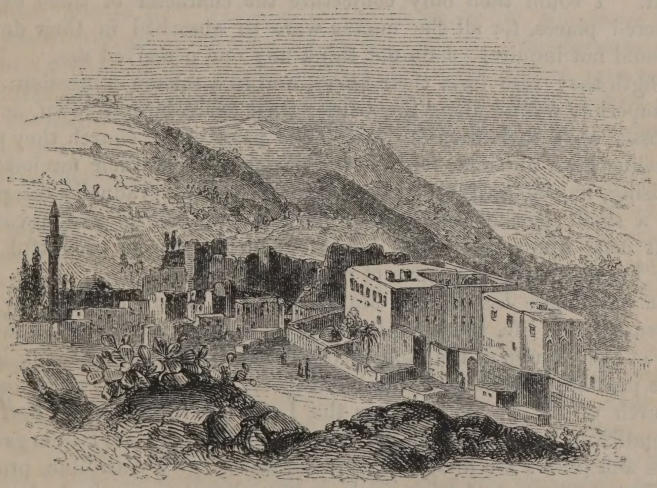
Behind this eminence, on which the imagination may reconstruct, without difficulty, an ancient town, with its walls, bastions, and towers, the hills began to mount gradually from the plain, their sides spotted black and gray with clusters of olives and holm-oaks. Between these hills, and the more lofty and frowning mountains of which they formed the bases, and which towered majestically above them, doubtless some torrent foamed, or the waters of some deep lake evaporated in the first heats of the morning sun, for a white and bluish vapour hung over the vacant space, and gently hid the higher range of mountains behind its transparent curtain, through which the rays of the sun streamed at intervals. Farther, and higher still, a third chain of mountains, enveloped in perfect gloom, rose in circular and unequal peaks, and gave to the whole of this delightful landscape that aspect of majesty, energy, and sublimity, which should be always found in everything that is beautiful, either as an element or a contrast. From point

to point this third chain was broken, and opened over a vast space of pale silvery sky, sprinkled with clouds lightly touched with vermilion: and behind this magnificent amphitheatre, two or three ridges of the distant Lebanon came out like advanced promontories upon the arch of heaven; and such of them as first caught the early rays of the sun appeared so transparent, that we believed we could see the light of the firmament they hid from us trembling through them. Add to this spectacle, the serene expanse of the heavens, and the pureness of the light, and the force of the shades which characterise an Asiatic atmosphere; scatter in the plain a ruined khan, long rows of reddish cows, of white camels, of black goats, going with slow steps to seek the scarce but limpid and refreshing water; figure to yourself a few Arab horsemen, mounted on their light coursers, and scouring along the plain, glittering in their silvered arms and scarlet clothing, and groups of women, from the neighbouring villages, clad in their long sky-blue tunics, a broad white sash, with the ends trailing on the ground, and a blue turban, ornamented with little fillets of Venetian sequins—add here and there on the hill-sides Turkish and Arab hamlets, with walls of the colour of rock, and houses without roofs, confounded with the rocks of the hill itself; clouds of azure smoke rising from interval to interval between the olive and cypress trees which surround these villages; stones scooped like troughs (the tombs of the patriarchs); heads of granite columns, and sculptured capitals, scattered around the fountains beneath your horses feet—conceive all this, and you will have the most exact and faithful idea of the delicious plain of Zabulon, of that of Nazareth, and of that of Sephoris, and of Tabor. Such a land, repeopled with a young and Jewish nation, cultivated and watered by intelligent industry, fructified by a tropical sun, producing spontaneously all the plants necessary or agreeable to man, from the sugar-cane and the banana to the vine and the grain of temperate climates, to the cedar and pine of the Alps—such a land, say I, would still be that of promise at the present day, if Providence should restore to it a people, and a condition of repose and liberty.

From the plain of Zabulon, we passed over gently rising hills, more sandy than the first, to the village of Sefurieh, the Sepphoris of Josephus, the ancient Diocæsarea of the Romans, the largest town in Palestine, after Jerusalem, in the time of Herod Agrippa.

A great number of stone blocks, excavated for tombs, had marked our road up to the summit of the hillock on which Sepphoris was situated, and on the top we found a solitary granite column still standing, and indicating the place where there had been a temple. Finely sculptured capitals lay on the ground at the foot of the column, and huge fragments of cut stone, carried off from some great Roman structures, were strewn in every direction, and were employed as boundaries for the fields of the Arabs, for a mile round Sefurieh. Here an inexhaustible spring of excellent water, gushing between fig-trees and pomegranates, supplies the inhabitants of two or three valleys. We sat down beneath the trees, and had to wait for more than an hour before we could slake the thirst of our caravan, so numerous were the herds of kine and of camels led thither by the Arab herdsmen from all quarters of the valley: countless lines of black goats and kine streaked the plain and the hill sides in the direction of Nazareth.

I lay down, wrapped up in my cloak, under a fig-tree, a little way off from the fountain, and gazed for a long while on this scene of the ancient days. Our horses were grouped irregularly around us, their feet hobbled, their Turkish saddles on their backs, their heads hung low to gain the protecting shade of their own pendent manes; our sabres, guns, and pistols were suspended from the branches over our heads. Some Bedouin Arabs, dressed in a single piece of cloth, striped black and white like a goat's fleece, were seated in a circle not far off, and stared at us with the looks of vultures. Women of Sefurieh, clad precisely as in the days of Abraham and Isaac, in blue tunics girt round their middles, with the folds of an inner white tunic falling gracefully over the blue, were carrying empty pitchers, laid on their sides, or bearing them back, filled and erect, on their heads, steadying them with both hands like the caryatides of the Acropolis. Other girls, similarly dressed, were washing at the fountain, and laughed with each other, as they bent their dark eyes on us. Others, again, in richer garments, their heads braided with strings of piastres or gold sequins, were dancing under a broad pomegranate tree at some distance from the fountain. The dance consisted only of a slow monotonous movement in a circle, with easy liquid gestures, and now and then a few steps, devoid of art, but not without grace. These Arab women were not veiled, and, though their faces were slightly tatooed, there was a delicacy and a regularity in their lineaments that distinguished them from the Turkish race. They continued to dance and sing all the time our halt lasted, and seemed not at all offended at our scrutiny of their costume and their proceedings. We heard that they were assembled in waiting for the marriage presents a young Arab had gone to purchase at Nazareth for one of the girls



Nazareth.

of Sefurieh, his betrothed; and indeed we encountered the presents that same day on the road. They consisted of a bolting cloth for separating the flour

from the bran, a piece of cotton cloth, and one of a ruder texture to make a tunic for the bride.

It was just five o'clock when we came to Nazareth, which was not visible till we were immediately above it. The capital of Galilee is now a little town containing 3000 inhabitants, chiefly Christians. Its white houses are delightfully situated on a gentle acclivity, hemmed in by mountains on all sides but one, which opens on a valley about two miles and a half in length. The Greek church, the high minaret of the Turkish mosque, and the extensive broad walls of the Latin convent, were the first objects that caught our eyes.

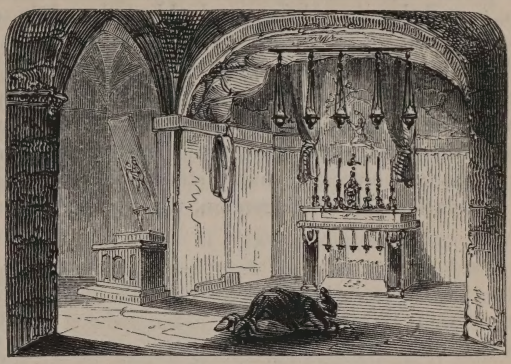
We proceeded at once to the Latin convent; the inner door was closed; and passing through a small arch at the upper end of the court, and raising a curtain, I stood in the Church of the Annunciation. It was the hour of the vesper service, and the monks were all on their knees with their arms stretched, in the manner of the Franciscans, towards heaven. It was dark, and no light came from without, but candles and lamps innumerable gave a rich colour to all around. The procession was over, and the monks were immoveable in prayer; their devoted attitudes, their bald heads and long beards, had a most imposing effect. The solemn notes of the organ, the odour of incense, and the handsome building itself, with the sudden manner in which I had descended into it from the hills, had an air of mystery about it that seemed not of this earth. It was not profane, I hope, in so holy a neighbourhood, to remember the Scotch knight in the subterranean chapel of Engaddi: just such a surprise did it all seem to me. Beneath the altar, which stands in the centre of the church, was a flight of steps leading into a cave, over which a soft stream of light was cast from several lamps that hung within it. I could then only conjecture the character of these evidently most sacred places, for all the monks were so absorbed in their devotions that I could not inquire. I do not think any one perceived me.

At length they rose from their knees, and in a solemn procession, headed by the superior, wound along the aisles; their heads bowed down, and their arms crossed upon their breasts. At certain parts of the church they paused, and kneeling for a moment, touched the pavement with their foreheads, and again rising, moved on, till all being finished, they gradually disappeared through a small door beneath the organ loft: the last of the devout line closed it after him; and I was left alone in the church, doubtful almost whether I had witnessed a scene of reality or not.*

In the city where Joseph and Mary lived, and where our Saviour passed thirty years of his life, there is of course no lack of holy places; and as in the case of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, as many of these places as possible have with admirable economy been brought under one roof. The Church of the Annunciation in the Latin convent, next to that of the Holy Sepulchre, is the finest in the Holy Land. There are two organs, and the walls and pillars are hung with red damask striped with blue, producing a rich effect. The cave I have spoken of under the principal altar is the grotto where, as the story goes, the Virgin once lived, and where she received the salutation of the angel.—This grotto, which was the Virgin's kitchen,

* Skinner.

is now a chapel; and over it, according to the Catholic legend, once stood the house which afterwards, to escape Mohammedan contamination, wandered away through the air to Loretto in Italy, stopping for a time in Dalmatia or Illyria. In the grotto are two granite columns, designating the spots where the angel and the Virgin stood at the time of the annunciation. One of them is broken off below, and the upper part hangs from the roof—the monks say by a miracle, but others by mortar; and all over Galilee the miraculous pillar is celebrated for its virtue in curing diseases. Joseph's workshop, and the synagogue where Christ applied the words of Isaiah to himself, are also chapels near the convent; and so, too, is a small chamber, containing the most singular resort of the devout in Nazareth, namely, the stone table on which the monks say our Lord ate with his disciples both before and after the resurrection: the wall of the chapel is hung round with the certificates of the sacred nature of the relic, written in every language known throughout Christendom. The fact is recorded merely as a tradition of the church; but the stone procures seven years' plenary indulgence for all who say an *Ave Maria* or a *Paternoster* in a proper spirit. I was about knocking off a piece as a memorial, but the friar who accompanied me checked me, and, turning round a nail in one of the many holes in the surface, he worked off a little powder, laid it carefully in a paper, and gave it to me.*



Grotto of the Annunciation.

A more interesting locality than any of these so called holy places is a fountain of the clearest water not very far from the town, to which nearly all the women seem to flock: it is called after the Virgin, from the belief that she used to draw water from it for her household,—a tradition of greater likelihood than those which have endowed buildings with the power of giving indulgences to their visitors.

The little Maronite church of Nazareth stands quite in the S. W. part of the town under a precipice of the hill, which here breaks off in a perpendicular wall forty or fifty feet in height. We noticed several other similar precipices in the western hill around the village. Some of these, perhaps that by the Maronite church, may well have been the spot whither the Jews led Jesus "unto the brow of a hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong; but he passing through the midst of them went his way." There is here no intimation that his escape was favoured by the exertion of any miraculous power; but he made his way fearlessly

* Stephens. Skinner. Dr. Robinson.

through the crowd; and probably eluded their pursuit by availing himself of the narrow and crooked streets of the city.

The monks have chosen for the scene of this event the Mount of Precipitation, so called; a precipice overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, nearly two miles S. by E. of Nazareth. It appears to be seventy or eighty feet to the first shelving place, but to the very bottom three hundred. A stone four feet and a half high stands on the edge of it as a parapet, in which are some small round cavities, believed to be the marks of our Lord's fingers when he struggled against those who would have thrown him over. A little altar below cut in the rock, formerly stood within a chapel built by Saint Helena, the foundations of which remain, together with two cisterns of great depth.

Mount of Precipitation.

Among all the legends that have been fastened on the Holy Land I know of no one more clumsy than this; which pre-supposes that in a popular and momentary tumult they should have had the patience to lead off their victim to an hour's distance, in order to do what there was an equal facility for doing near at hand. Indeed such is the intrinsic absurdity of the legend, that the monks themselves now-a-days, in order to avoid it, make the ancient Nazareth to have stood on the summit of the precipice in question. But the good fathers forget the dilemma into which they thus bring themselves; for upon that supposition what becomes of the holy places now shown in the present town? *

The inhabitants of Nazareth differ somewhat in features and colour from the northern Syrians; their physiognomy approaches that of the Egyptians, while their dialect and pronunciation differ widely from those of Damascus. In western Palestine, especially on the coast, the inhabitants seem in general to bear more resemblance to the natives of Egypt than to those of northern

* Monro. Rev. E. Robinson, D.D., Biblical Researches in Palestine, &c. Lond. 1841.

Syria. Towards the east of Palestine, on the contrary, especially in the villages about Nablous, Jerusalem and Hebron, they are evidently of the Syrian stock in features, though not in language. It would be an interesting subject for an artist to portray accurately the different character of features of the Syrian nations; the Aleppine, the Turkman, the native of Lebanon, the Damascene, the inhabitant of the sea-coast from Beyroot to Akka, and the Bedouin, although all inhabiting the same country have distinct national physiognomies; and a slight acquaintance with them enables one to determine the native district of a Syrian, with almost as much certainty as an Englishman may be distinguished at first sight from an Italian or an inhabitant of the south of France.*

I took up my residence, during my stay at Nazareth, in the Latin convent, where I was hospitably received and fared well, so soon as I had satisfied the good fathers that I was indeed a genuine Englishman, and not an "American Englishman—not a missionary." When we were about to take our departure at six in the morning, all the Spanish and Italian fathers in the convent assembled in the court round our horses; and whilst some put up prayers for our safe journey, others filled our sacks with fresh provisions, excellent bread baked during the night, olives and Spanish chocolate. I made a donation towards the funds of the convent where I had been so kindly entertained; the superior appeared satisfied with its amount; but this did not prevent some of the young friars whispering their requests in my ear, and receiving in secret a few piastres to buy tobacco, and other trifling comforts to beguile their solitude.

Most travellers in the Holy Land have suffered their judgment as to the Terra Santa monks to be coloured and distorted by religious hostility or religious sympathy. Two writers we except, men differing from each other in their religious views, and most dissimilar in mental constitution and habits; these are Burckhardt and Lamartine. The former (speaking at a time when the suppression of the Terra Santa establishment seemed not unlikely) says that such an event "would be a great calamity; for it cannot be doubted that they have done honour to the European name in the Levant, and have been very beneficial to the cause of Christianity under the actual circumstances of the East."

Lamartine says, "Travellers," (Catholic travellers he means, and perhaps Chateaubriand especially,) "have given a romantic and false representation of these convents of the Holy Land. Nothing is less poetic or less religious, when inspected narrowly. Their conception is beautiful and grand. Men tear themselves from the delights of western civilisation to put their existence in jeopardy, or to lead a life of privations and martyrdom amongst the persecutors of their faith, on the very spots where the mysteries of their religion have consecrated the earth. They fast, they watch, they pray, in the midst of the blasphemies of the Turks and Arabs, in order that a little Christian incense shall still burn on each piece of ground where Christianity had birth. They are the guardians of the sacred cradle and sepulchre; the angel of judgment shall find them alone at these places, like the holy women who watched and wept near the empty tomb. All this is beautiful and

* Burckhardt.

sublime in thought; but in actual fact these ideas must vanish. There is no persecution, no martyrdom; all around these retreats there is a Christian population, ready for the service and orders of the monks of the convents. The Turks annoy them in no respect whatever; on the contrary they protect them. They are the most tolerant people on the earth, and understand better than others religion and prayer, in whatever language, and under whatever form, they are expressed. Atheism alone they detest, as they esteem it, with reason, a degradation of the human intellect, an insult to humanity much more than to the undoubted Being, God. These convents, besides, are under the respected and inviolable protection of the Christian powers, represented by their consuls. On a complaint of the superior, the consul writes to the pasha, and justice is done on the very instant. The monks whom I have seen in the Holy Land, far from presenting to me the image of the long martyrdom with which they had been credited, appeared to me the most happy, respected, and feared of the inhabitants of these countries. They inhabit a sort of strong castles, similar to those of our own middle ages. Their residences are inviolable, surrounded with walls, and closed with gates of iron. These gates are only opened for the Catholic population of the neighbourhood, which comes to assist at the offices, to receive a little pious instruction, and to pay, in respect and devotedness to the monks, the dues of the altar. I never went out accompanied by one of the fathers into the streets of a Syrian town, but the children and women came and bowed to the monk, and kissed his hand and the bottom of his robe. The Turks, even, very far from insulting them, seem to partake the respect which they everywhere command as they move along.

"Now, who are these monks? In general Spanish and Italian peasants, who have entered young into the convents of their country, and growing tired of the monastic life, are anxious to diversify it by the aspect of new countries, and seek to be sent to the Holy Land. Their residence in the house of their order established in the East, does not in general continue for more than two or three years. A vessel comes to take them back, and brings others in their place. Those who learn Arabic, and devote themselves to the service of the Catholic population of the towns, stay longer, and often pass there the whole of their lives. They follow the occupations and life of the country curés in France, but they are encircled with more veneration and attachment. Others remain shut up within the precincts of the convent, or pass from one house to another, in order to complete their pilgrimage, sometimes to Nazareth, or to Bethlehem, to Rome, to Jaffa, or to the convent of St. John in the desert. They have no other employment than the offices of the church, and the promenade in the gardens or on the terraces of the convent. No books, no studies, no useful function. They are devoured by listlessness; cabals are formed in the interior of the convent; the Spaniards decry the Italians, and the Italians the Spaniards. We were not much edified by the relations the monks of Nazareth gave of each other. We did not find a single individual amongst them who could sustain the slightest rational conversation, even on subjects which their vocation should have rendered familiar to them. No knowledge of sacred antiquity, of the fathers, or of the history of the places they resided in. The whole is reduced

to a certain number of popular and ridiculous traditions, which they transmit amongst themselves without examination, and which they deliver to travellers as they have received them from the ignorance and credulity of the Christian Arabs of the country. They all sigh for the moment of their deliverance, and return to Italy or Spain without any advantage to themselves or to religion. As for other points, the granaries of the convent are well filled; the cellars are stocked with the best wines this earth can produce. They do it all themselves. Every two years a ship arrives from Spain, bearing to the superiors the revenue supplied by the Catholic powers, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. This sum, increased by the pious alms of the Christians of Egypt, Greece, Constantinople, and Syria, furnishes them, it is said, with an income of from 12,000*l.* to 16,000*l.* sterling per annum, which is divided amongst the different convents, according to the number of monks and the wants of each community. The edifices are well supported, and everything indicates comfort, and even relative luxury, in the houses which I have visited. I have never witnessed anything flagitious in the monks' abodes in the Holy Land. Ignorance, idleness, and listlessness, are the three plagues which they should and could eradicate."

Mount Tabor, the scene traditionally assigned for the Transfiguration, but with great improbability, as at that epoch the summit of Tabor was crowned by a Roman citadel, is about seven miles distant from Nazareth. At its foot is the small and wretched village of "Deborah," where she who judged Israel is reported to have dispensed her decrees to the people who "came up to her for judgment." It is worthy of remark, that at the present day the Arabs assemble at the foot of the same Mount Tabor every Monday, to hold a bazaar, and dispose of their merchandise; the governor of Tabariah, in whose jurisdiction it is, either attending in person, or sending a deputy, to dispense justice. There is no village at the place, but the meeting is held in the open plain, as it might be, "under the palm-tree of Deborah;" and close to the spot are some ruins, at which all those who are debtors for tributes or duties are accustomed to pay them. Although it is merely related in the Book of Judges that the people "came up for judgment" to stated places at different periods, it is yet by no means improbable that they did at the same time transact other business, and that the meeting was also taken advantage of for the sale of merchandise, out of which ancient practice the present one seems to have grown. The people assemble here from

Mount Tabor.

every part of the central country, the Haouran, Acre, and from all the coast as far as Jaffa.*

The mountain stands perfectly isolated, rising from the plain in a rounded tapering form like a truncated cone, to the height probably of 1000 feet, covered with trees, grass, and wild flowers, from the base to the summit, and presenting the combination so rarely seen in natural scenery of the bold and the beautiful. The path wound round the mountain and gave us a view from all its different sides, every step presenting something new and more and more beautiful, until all was completely forgotten and lost in the exceeding loveliness of the view from the summit. Stripped of every association, and considered merely as an elevation commanding a view of unknown valleys and mountains, I never saw a mountain which for beauty of scene better repaid the toil of ascending it; and I need not say what an interest was given to every feature, when we saw in the valley beneath the large plain of Jezreel, the great battle-ground of nations; on the south the supposed range of Hermon, with whose dews the psalmist compares the "pleasantness of brethren dwelling together in unity;" beyond, the ruined village of Endor, where dwelt the witch who raised up the dead prophet Samuel; and near it the little city of Nain, where our Saviour restored the widow's son to life; on the east the mountains of Gilboa, where Saul and his armour-bearer fell upon their swords, to save themselves from the hands of the Philistines; and beyond them the Sea of Galilee, the theatre of our Lord's miracles, where in the fourth watch of the night he appeared to the terrified disciples walking on the face of the waters.

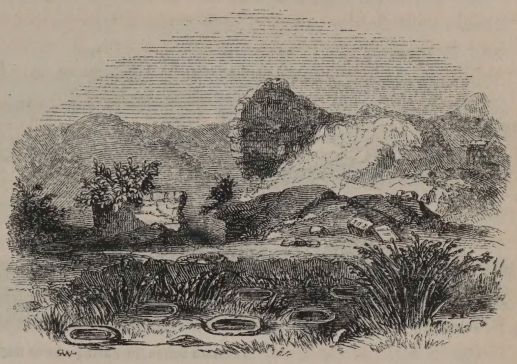
The first place of note on our way to Tabariah was the reputed Cana of Galilee, called by the Arabs Kefr Kenna. We halted by the fountain at the entrance of the little village, that we might drink of the clearest and most delicious water possible,—the best, the Christians of Palestine say, in the world: from it were the vessels filled for the marriage feast. The house is still shown in which the miracle was performed; and as some earthen jars are sunk into the floor, the devout searchers for relics are made to believe that they are the very jars in use on that day. A church was built over the spot, which, like all others for a similar purpose, is in ruins.

Kefr Kenna.

The road to Tiberias is full of interest. Beyond this village a path leads through fields of grain, where the apostles plucked the ears of corn

* Monro.

as they walked. Not very much farther is the Mount of Beatitude, whence our Saviour delivered his sermon. It stands very little above a green plain of the stillest possible appearance. There is a gravity about the scene that would have struck me with peculiar awe, even though I had not known the peculiar solemnity attached to it. Whether the tradition be true or not, it was just the place where, in those primitive days, or even in the state of society which exists now in the Holy Land, such an event might have taken place; the preacher standing a little up the hill, and the multitude sitting down below him. Indeed, so strikingly similar in all its details is the state of society existing here now to that which existed in the time of our Saviour, that I remember when standing on the ruins of a small church supposed to cover the precise spot where Christ preached that compendium of goodness and wisdom, it struck me that if I or any other man should preach new and strange things, the people would come out from the cities and villages to listen and dispute, as they did under the preaching of our Lord.*

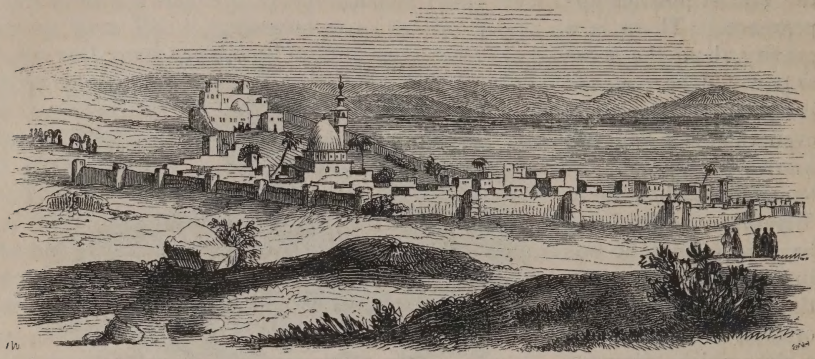


Cana. Waterpots.

Further on we passed the scene of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. These and other localities, marked out for the veneration of the pious, may be and perhaps are mere monkish conjectures; but one thing we know, that our Saviour and his disciples journeyed on this road; that he looked upon the same scenes, and that in all probability somewhere within the range of my eye these deeds and miracles were actually performed. At all events, as I reached the brow of the height above Tiberias, before me in full view was the hallowed Lake of Gennesareth. Here we cannot be wrong: Christ walked upon that sea, and stilled the raging of its waters, and preached the tidings of salvation to the cities on its banks. To me I confess, so long as we continued round the lake, the attraction lay more in these associations than in the scenery. The lake presents indeed a beautiful sheet of limpid water in a deep, depressed basin; from which the shores rise in general steeply and continuously all round, except where a ravine, or sometimes a deep wady, occasionally interrupts them: but the hills are rounded and tame, with little of the picturesque in their form; they are decked by no shrubs or forests; and, in fine, whoever looks here for the magnificence of the Swiss lakes, or the softer beauty of those of England, will be disappointed. One interesting object greeted our eyes—a little boat with a white sail gliding over the waters; this and another were the only ones as we afterwards found upon all the lake.†

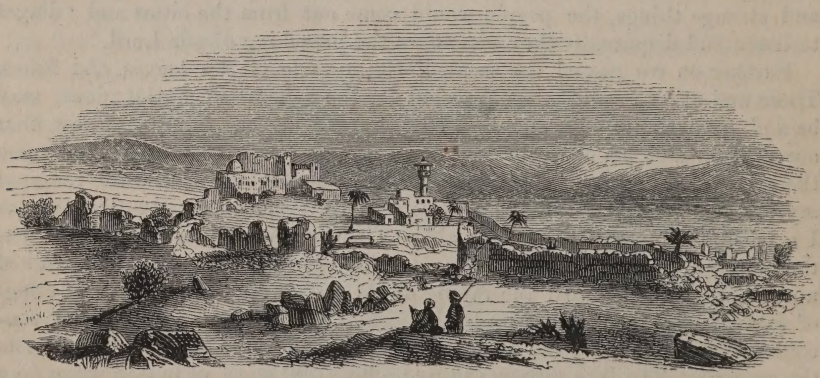
* Stephens. Skinner. † Dr. Robinson.

Tabariah, the ancient Tiberias, stands close to the lake, upon a small plain



Tabariah before the Earthquake of 1837.

surrounded by mountains. Its situation is extremely hot and unhealthy, as the mountains impede the free course of the westerly winds which prevail throughout Syria during the summer. The town is in the form of a narrow parallelogram about half a mile long; surrounded on the land side by a thick wall, once not far from twenty feet high, with towers at regular intervals. A frightful earthquake befel Tabariah, Jan. 1, 1837. The walls of the



Tabariah after the Earthquake of 1837.

town were thrown down; the castle suffered severely; very many of the houses were demolished, indeed few remained without injury. Out of a population of twenty-five hundred there perished probably seven hundred persons, the larger proportion of whom were Jews. A Mohammedan with whom my companion fell into conversation at the threshing floors, related that he and four others were returning down the mountain west of the city in the afternoon when the earthquake occurred. All at once the earth opened and closed again, and two of his companions disappeared. He ran home terrified: and found that his wife, mother, and two others of the family

had perished. On digging next day where his two companions had disappeared, they were found dead in a standing posture.

The Jews occupy a quarter in the middle of the town, adjacent to the lake; this was formerly surrounded by a wall with a single gate, which was closed every night. Tiberias is one of the four holy cities of the Hebrews, and here, as at Jerusalem, Hebron and Safed, the unhappy remnant of a fallen people, still hover round the graves of their fathers, and though degraded and trampled under foot, are still looking for the restoration of their temporal kingdom. They are divided into two classes, Asiatic and European, with distinct rabbins, synagogues, and schools. The Europeans are Muscovites, Poles, and Germans, a poor, haggard, and filthy race, the shadows of those that may be seen in the fairs of Leipsic. The Asiatic Jews are more thriving, and so too are the Spanish and Portuguese, who everywhere associate with their Eastern brethren, most of whom speak their language. They observe a singular custom here in praying. While the rabbin recites the Psalms of David, or the prayers extracted from them, the congregation frequently imitate, by their voice and gestures, the meaning of some remarkable passages: for example, when the rabbin pronounces the words, "Praise the Lord with the sound of the trumpet," they imitate the sound of the trumpet through their closed fists. When "a horrible tempest" occurs, they puff and blow to represent a storm; or should he mention "the cries of the righteous in distress," they all set up a loud screaming; and it not unfrequently happens that while some are still blowing the storm, others have already begun the cries of the righteous, thus forming a concert which it is difficult for any but a zealous Hebrew to hear with gravity.*

For neither love nor money will the Jewish population open their doors to a stranger after dark. An English party arriving at a late hour, sent a servant to buy some wine of the Jews, who sell a very good sort; but he found all the houses closed against him. "They were afraid," he said, "of being made Turks if they opened their doors in the night time." Truly a most awful calamity to arise from selling a bottle of wine! To account for the fear by which the Hebrew damsels of Tiberias are oppressed—for the conversion is peculiarly destined for them—it seems that some time ago a Turk was captivated by the beauty of a Jewess, and did all he could to obtain her. She was not to be won by fair means; so, watching an opportunity, when one night there was eating and drinking in her father's house, he rushed in with a party of servants, and carried away the prize. When called on to make some defence for the outrage before the governor, he had merely, he said, had pity on a maiden whose charms might add fresh delight to Paradise; and, as "God is merciful," had converted her to the faith of Mohammed. "It is the will of heaven," said the governor, "and fate is not be resisted." There was an end therefore of the matter; and the chance of being made a Turk has been ever since a very natural fear in the city.

The only monument of antiquity in the town is the church of St. Peter, a building measuring about five-and-thirty feet by twenty: it has a vaulted stone roof, and in shape is not unlike a boat turned upside down. It is said

* Burckhardt.

to have been built in the apostolic times on the place where the house of Peter stood, and whence—for it is washed by the lake—he used to push off his boat to ply his craft on the waters. But the style of its architecture and the Arabic letters in an inverted position on one of the stones composing it, prove that it cannot be older than the time of the crusades. The church, which has survived the earthquake of 1837, has nine small arched windows without any means of shutting out the air: it usually serves Frank travellers instead of a khan, and thus it has become somewhat notorious for the swarms of fleas with which it, as well as all the houses in the town, is infested. It is a current saying in the country that "the king of the fleas has his court at Tabariah:" few human sovereigns can boast of so populous a capital.

Church of Tabariah.

The former grandeur of Herod's constructions may be guessed from the quantity of broken columns that strew the shore beyond the southern wall. They extend for more than a mile, and there is no doubt that this ground was covered by the ancient city. The plain runs back half a mile to the foot of the mountain, in the sides of which are long ranges of tombs. It was from one of these tombs, said our guide, that the man possessed of devils rushed forth when our Saviour rebuked the unclean spirits, and made them enter into a herd of swine, which ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were drowned.

One day while I was exploring these caves, a Bedouin, to my great surprise, started from the floor of one of them and rushed to the entrance; he had probably been sleeping and was enraged at my intrusion; that part of valour which is called discretion I put in practice on the present occasion, took to my heels, and never looked behind me till I arrived at the foot of the mountain where I had left my guide in charge of the mules. The first thing I did was to seize the gun, which was slung across my saddle; and I had just time to cock it, when I saw my pursuer about ten yards off, gesticulating violently, and pointing his musket at me: he was alone, and might have fared badly had we proceeded to extremities, for it was ten to one if his rusty matchlock was in order, and my servant was now beside me sword in hand. I simply kept the gun to my shoulder, regarding him steadily: he retreated a few steps, and cried out, "*Magnoun enti?*" "Are you mad?" My Arab roared in reply, "*Eiwa magnoun kitir.*" "Yes, we are very mad." The Bedouin seemed to believe him, for he ran up the side of the mountain like a goat, and we soon lost sight of him.

A mile south of Tiberias are the hot springs over which Ibrahim Pasha has erected what passes here with reason for a splendid edifice. The principal or public bath occupies the centre of the building, consisting of a large circular apartment, with a marble pavement all round the circular reservoir in the middle, to which several steps lead down. There are also private rooms for wealthier guests, furnished in remarkably good style. These baths are in great repute: hundreds of scorbutic and rheumatic patients flock to them annually from all parts of Syria. There are four springs, one of them sulphureous; two of the others are chalybeate. The water as it issues from the ground is too hot to bear the hand in; a pocket thermometer dipped in it and then examined in the air stood at 140° F. The water is allowed to cool somewhat before it is admitted into the bath; but it still remains so very hot that it was a considerable time before I could immerse my whole body in it. On coming out an old sheikh who attended the bath placed me on a marble slab, when, after repeating several prayers over me, he twisted my joints about, and consoled me with the assurance that I had a diseased liver, which he felt through my back-bone.

May, 1840.—We pitched our tents, says a recent traveller,* on the margin of the lake, determining to prolong our stay over the morrow. We found bitter reason to repent this arrangement. All my previous conceptions of heat were inadequate to the reality of a hot wind which set in during the night from the desert, and which at this season I was told was without precedent. At Jericho the sun was powerful; but it was honest heat, tempered by the breeze and mitigated at night. Here the night scarcely lowered the thermometer a degree below 104. The wind, confined by the conformation of the surrounding mountains, blew strong down the valley like a furnace-blast through a funnel. The ineffable luxury of a morning and evening bathe in the lake was dearly purchased by the miseries of the day and night. I could observe while enjoying this temporary relief that the water actually swarmed with fish, generally of small size, near the shore, but large ones were taking the fly at a little distance. One of the two boats on the lake passing near the shore in front of our encampment, I longed for a sail, and desired our janissary to hail her and make the proposal. The boat at first pursued her course; but I presume that Hassan in his zeal resorted to threats, for she soon came to, and landed her master, a Prussian Jew, who accosted me in bad German, and deprecated my supposed wrath with excuses as profound as though I had any right to command his services. As he was standing with bated breath and uncovered in the burning sun, I desired him to put on his broad-brimmed hat.† The astonishment he displayed at this common act of civility, or rather humanity, convinced me that he expected to be knocked down as a preliminary to further conversation. I of course soon relieved him from further anxiety, and he quitted me to prosecute his mercantile voyage—I hope under no bad impression of

* Lord Francis Egerton.

† The broad-brimmed, flat, black turban of the Jews, seems to be the best covering of the head in use in Syria, on account of the protection it affords the eyes against the rays of the sun. But the German and Polish Jews retain their European fur caps and felt hats.

Christian dealings, or of our mode of employing the Pasha's firman, which I suspect had been made the most of by our zealous official.

We found the kiosk scarcely more supportable than our tents as to heat, and far worse as to noise; for parties of men and women were using the public bath alternately through the night, sustaining an uproar such as I never heard. We could make no attempt to explore the shores or look for the lost site of Capernaum. No physical lassitude, however, could deprive the scene of its impressions. The hot red haze which obscured the distant mountains by day, melted into a deep purple towards evening. At night the fires of Arab charcoal-burners on the opposite hills looked like the bivouac of some Sennacherib. The waters, agitated by the hot wind, broke with a soothing sound upon the shore.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM TABARIAH TO SAFED, AND THENCE TO DAMASCUS.

SETTING out from Tiberias, northward, we crossed the point of a mountain running down into the lake, and in about an hour came to a small Mohammedan village, called Mejdel, evidently the Migdal of the Old Testament, and the Magdala of the New.

Half-an-hour west of Mejdel, on the high perpendicular cliff forming the N.-W. side of the Wady-el-Hamâm, are situated the singular remains of the Kelaat Ibn Ma'an, the Castle of the Son of Ma'an; or Kelaat Hamaam, the Pigeons' castle, on account of the vast quantity of wild pigeons that breed there. In the calcareous mountain are many natural caverns, which have been united together by passages cut in the rock, and enlarged in order to render them commodious for habitation. Walls have also been built across the natural openings, so that no person could enter them except through the narrow communicating passages; and wherever the nature of the almost perpendicular cliff permitted it, small bastions were built to defend the entrance of the castle, which has thus been rendered almost impregnable. The perpendicular cliff forms its protection above, and the access below is by a narrow path, so steep as not to allow of a horse mounting it. In the midst of the caverns several deep cisterns have been hewn. The whole might afford refuge to about six hundred men; but the walls are now much damaged. A few vaults of communication with pointed arches denote Gothic architecture.

Dr. Robinson produces very strong evidence for identifying this fortress with certain fortified caverns near the village of Arbela in Galilee, mentioned by Josephus, and also with the Messaloth spoken of in 1 Macc. ix. 2. Messaloth may perhaps be nothing more than the Hebrew word signifying *steps*, *stories*, *terraces*.

When Herod the Great took possession of Sepphoris, these caverns near Arbela were occupied by a band of robbers, who greatly harrassed and distressed the inhabitants throughout the region. Herod first sent a detachment of troops to take post at Arbela, to act as a check upon their

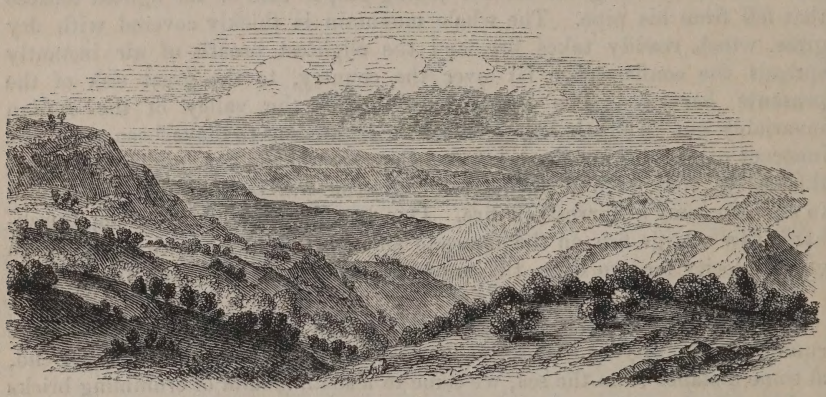
depredations, and after forty days followed with his whole force in order to exterminate them. On his approach they boldly gave him battle, and at first routed his left wing; but finally they were put to flight and pursued beyond the Jordan. Herod now laid siege to the caverns; but as they were situated in the midst of precipitous cliffs, overhanging a deep valley, with only a steep and narrow path leading to the entrance, the assault was exceedingly difficult. Parties of soldiers were at length let down in large boxes suspended by chains from above, and attacked with fire and sword the men who defended the entrance, or dragged them out with long hooks and dashed them down the precipice. In this way the place was at last subdued.

In returning from the Kalaat Hamaam, Burckhardt was several times reprimanded by his guide for not taking proper care of the lighted tobacco that fell from his pipe. The whole mountain is thickly covered with dry grass, which readily takes fire, and the slightest breath of air instantly spreads the conflagration far over the country, to the great risk of the peasants' harvest. The Arabs who inhabit the valley of the Jordan invariably put to death any person who is known to have been even the innocent cause of firing the grass, and they have made it a public law among themselves, that, even in the height of intestine warfare, no one shall attempt to set his enemy's harvest on fire. One evening while at Tabariah, Burckhardt saw a large fire on the opposite side of the lake, which spread with great velocity for two days, till its progress was checked by the Wady Feik.

We were now crossing a rich valley, through which several streams were running and emptying themselves into the lake; and towards the other end, at some distance from the sea, we came to a small mound of crumbling bricks and stones, almost overgrown with grass; and this is all that remains of the city of Bethsaida, the city of Peter and Andrew and Philip. If we had diverged a hundred yards one way or the other, I should have passed without seeing it. A short distance off, among the hills that border the plain, alike in ruins, is her sister Chorazin. Leaving the valley, and crossing a rude point of the mountain, that runs boldly to the lake, the road being so narrow that we were obliged to unload the baggage horses, we descended to the plains of Gennesareth, the richest and most fertile plain on the shores of the lake, and, perhaps, for a combination of natural advantages, soil, beauty of scenery, climate and temperature, exceeded by no place in the world. A short distance across the plain we came to a little mill set in motion by a large, clear, and beautiful stream, conveyed in two stone aqueducts. Four or five Arab families lived there, in huts made with palm leaves; the men lay stretched on the ground, lulled to sleep by the murmur of the falling waters.

From here to Talhoun, the supposed site of Capernaum, the rich plain of Gennesareth was lying a wild and luxuriant waste, entirely uncultivated and neglected, except in one place where an Arab was ploughing a small plot for tobacco. Approaching, the single Arab footpath becomes lost, and the soil was so overgrown with long grass, bushes, and weeds, that they rose above my horse's back, and I found it easier to dismount and pick my way on foot.

The ruins of Capernaum, if such they be, extend more than a mile along the shore and back towards the mountains; but they were so overgrown with grass and bushes, that it was difficult to move among them. Climbing upon a high wall which, though itself ruined, seemed proud of its pre-eminence above the rest, I had a full view of the ruins of the city, of the plains of Gennesareth, and the whole extent of the Sea of Galilee, from where the Jordan comes down from the mountains, until it passes out and rolls on to the Dead Sea. It is about sixteen miles long and six wide. This was by far the most imposing view of the lake I had enjoyed; and I am not sure that in all my journeying in the East, I had a more interesting moment than when I sat among the ruins of Capernaum, looking out upon the Lake of Gennesareth.



Sea of Galilee.

A single pelican was floating at my feet, and, like myself, he was alone. He was so near me that I could have hit him with a stone; he was the only thing I saw that had life, and he seemed looking at me with wonder, and asking me why I lingered in the desolate city. I am aware that lately there has been some dispute whether this be the site of Capernaum; but I had now passed along the whole western shore of the lake, and if this be not Capernaum, my horse's hoofs must have trampled upon the city of our Saviour's love without my knowing where that city stood.

Turning away from the consecrated lake, we fixed our eyes on the end of my day's journey, the towering city of Safed. About an hour from the lake, we came to the great caravan road from Jerusalem to Damascus, and a little off from this to a large khan, in which there is a well-known tradition, as the pit into which Joseph was cast by his brethren before they sold him to the Ishmaelites. In all probability the legend establishing this locality has no better foundation than most of the others in the Holy Land; but I cannot help remarking, that I do not attach the importance assigned by others to the circumstance of its distance from Hebron, at that time Jacob's dwelling-place. We know that Joseph's brethren were feeding their father's flock at Shechem; and when Joseph came thither, "wandering in the field, he inquired after his brethren, and a man told him, They are departed hence,

for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan." If there be any good reason for calling this place Dothan, to me it does not seem at all strange, that in the pastoral state of society which existed then, and still exists unchanged, Jacob's sons had driven their flocks to a pasture ground two days further on. It happened, just as if to afford a striking illustration of the scene supposed to have taken place here, while we were loitering around the khan, a caravan of merchants came up on their way from Damascus to Egypt; and the buying and selling of slaves, white or black, being still a part of the trade between these places, I had no doubt that if I had offered my servant for sale, they would have bought him and carried him to Egypt, where perhaps he would have risen to be a grand vizier.*

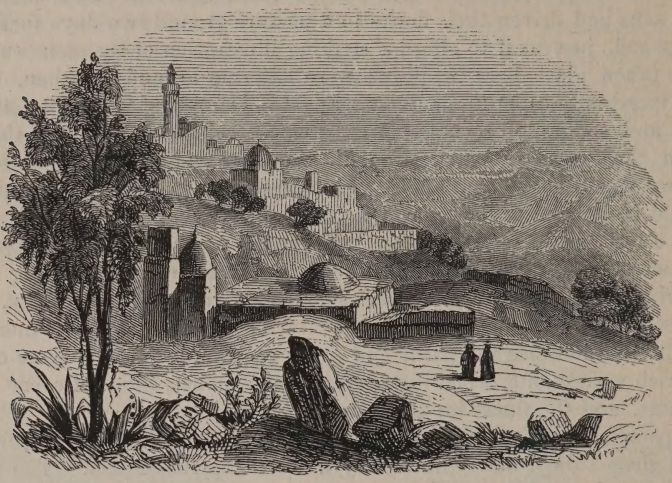
Beyond the khan we were soon lost among rocks and wild crags, over which we stumbled and scrambled for three hours without meeting a soul, or hearing even the sound of the shepherd's voice. Occasionally, as we ascended, the heights commanded a view of the lake and of all its mountains and hills. Sometimes the paths and green slopes above them were covered with a rich variety of flowers, the purple iris, anemones, tulips of every colour, geraniums, and the finest lupines I ever saw.

We passed the village of Acbala, situated in a shady winding opening into a broad deep valley, and watered by a clear copious stream. The village consists of forty or fifty houses, the soil about is exceedingly fertile, and the people have a much more thriving appearance than is commonly seen among the peasants of Palestine. The atmosphere was vocal and almost darkened by an incredible number of bees. Their hives are cylinders, made of earth, about two or three feet in length, by eight or ten inches in diameter, having the entrances at one end. These were piled one upon another like logs of wood, in some instances forty or fifty together. The culture of bees would seem to be the chief business of the people; and I was reminded, for the first time since entering Palestine, that honey was formerly one of the staple products. This Acbala is very probably the ancient Arbela mentioned by Josephus as a village near the robbers' fastnesses captured by Herod.†

Nearly eighteen months had now elapsed since the calamitous earthquake of 1837 when we visited Safed. The frightful spectacle of human misery had of course passed away; but the place was still little more than one great mass of ruins. In the eastern quarter many of the houses had been again built up; though more still lay around us level with the ground. The southern quarter was perhaps the least injured of all; here the rubbish had been cleared away, and this was now the chief seat of the Mohammedan population. Here too the Mutesellim had taken up his abode. The castle remained in the same state in which it had been left by the earthquake, a shapeless heap of ruins; so shapeless, indeed, that it was difficult to make out its original form. In the Jews' quarter many houses had likewise been temporarily rebuilt; but the rubbish had not been removed from the streets. We passed throughout the whole quarter, and found the poor Jews still wandering amid the ruins, among which we could scarcely wend our way. Many of them were employed in digging among the rubbish, each apparently before what had once been his dwelling. In general the town

* Stephens. † Dr. Olin.

was beginning to revive; and the appearance of the place was more busy and far less desolate than I had expected to find it. The usual Friday



Safed.

market was again regularly held, and attended by the peasants of the surrounding villages, even from a considerable distance.

In a few more years the traces of the earthquake will probably be no longer visible in Safed. Such is the tenor of Oriental life. Earthquakes and the desolations of war have again and again swept over the land, and laid waste its cities and villages; but the inhabitants cling to the soil, rebuild their towns, and live on as if nothing had happened; until after an interval, another, and perhaps more terrible destruction, overtakes them. Thus, Safed itself, like Tiberias, was laid in ruins, and a great portion of its inhabitants perished in the great earthquake of October 30th, 1759.*

Safed appears obviously to have formed the central point of the last mighty concussion, and to have suffered more in proportion than any other place; except, perhaps, the adjacent villages of Ain ez Zeitun and El Jish. Yet the destruction, as we have seen, extended more or less to Tiberias and the region round Nazareth; many of the villages in the region, east of the lake, were likewise laid in ruins; many houses were thrown down in Tyre and Sidon, and several were cracked and injured even in Beyroot. In Naplous also the shock was severely felt, and a number of persons were killed. It is a remarkable circumstance that some villages remained entirely unaffected by the earthquake, although situated directly between other places which were destroyed. Thus a small village (Sasa ?) near to El Jish and Safed was uninjured. On the way from Tiberias to Nazareth, Esh Shajerah was overthrown; Kefr Kenna received no harm; Er Reineh was levelled to the ground; Nazareth sustained little damage; and Sefurieh escaped entirely. All these places lie upon the same range of hills, with no visible obstruction

* Dr. Robinson.

to break the shocks between them; and the exceptions are therefore the more wonderful.*

We stopped in the bazaar, a large area, with some ranges of open stalls or sheds around it, lying between the Mohammedan and the Jewish quarters. It is a curious place. As I sat on my horse the smoke of a kitchen or cook-shop rose from the earth near me. On looking about I perceived the mouth of the chimney from which it issued rising a few inches above the ground at my horse's feet. I was upon the flat roof of a house, and soon discovered that a considerable portion of the bazaar was undermined in a similar way. The natural hill-side is nearly perpendicular, and it is found easier to place the houses one upon another than to excavate for more solid foundations, and a more commodious site. Just on my left hand was a precipice, upon approaching the brink of which I found myself moving upon the tops of the houses that formed one side of the next street, to which the rows of mud-built tenements gave the appearance of a ditch of similar dimensions dug in the earth.†

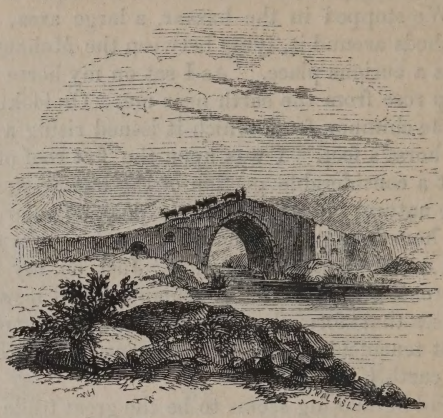
Saddle-making seems to be the great trade in the bazaar, which is supplied with all the sweet things of an Eastern mart, and choked up with the countless flies that buzz about them. I observed the most excellent figs, which were so glued together that several blows were requisite to divide them. Among the provisions Judith took to the Assyrian camp, were "lumps of figs," an expression that exactly describes the sort of thing sold in Safed at this day. I hope this town was indeed Bethulia, and that the interest I felt in roaming through the valley was not misplaced, and that the army of Holofernes did really occupy the fountains that are in it. I confess however that Dr. Robinson's arguments have made me sceptical on this point. I saw first in Safed the remains of chambers of leaves, that it is the custom to build on the flat roofs of the houses to escape the insects and the heat in the lower parts. In this manner, perhaps, Judith made her a tent on the top of the house when she retired to indulge her grief.

4th March.—I left Saphet at mid-day,‡ and descended to the plain by a noble defile, which terminated in a narrow valley naturally rich, but miserably neglected. It was strewed with the carcasses of dead animals that had perished in the snow. The air was so corrupt, that I had not resolution to pause within its influence, and look back on the hills of Palestine, which are entered from this quarter by the passage I had come down, on each side of which the mountains rise like high walls nearly to the city of Safed.

In four hours we reached the banks of the Jordan, towards which many travellers were drawing. A caravan of camels was passing the bridge on its way to Damascus; and a very picturesque string of Arabs, mounted on pretty little horses, met me in the mouth of a green dell, before I descended to it. I stopped awhile to enable them to pass, and had the advantage of attracting a great share of notice. The women were sitting astride upon their steeds with children on their laps and at their breasts, as quietly as if they were lounging on cushions; the men were armed and well mounted. My solitary state did not provoke one uncivil speech. They saluted me with good humour, and passed briskly on.

* Dr. Robinson. † Dr. Olin. ‡ Skinner.

The bridge over the Jordan is called "The Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob," from a tradition which I could not sufficiently understand to take interest in. The river is here about fifty yards wide, and runs with considerable rapidity. As this is the high road from all parts of Palestine to Damascus, there is a perpetual thoroughfare. A few Arab tents are scattered about the valley, and the horses are grazing on the slopes above. Two or three miserable huts stand on the bridge, and a khan on the bank beyond it: a number of loose stones about this building, spoke ill for its solidity. A dead horse is stretched at the entrance, while two are fast corrupting within the area.



Bridge over the Jordan.

The ruinous and destitute condition of these places affords striking evidence of the weakness and vices of the Ottoman rule, as their vast dimensions and solidity of structure do of the efficiency and magnificence of that of their founders. No element in the Mussulman character is more remarkable, or more unfavourable to natural prosperity, than the indifference to the progress of decay, the unwillingness to repair the ravages of time. Even when a little attention or a little expense would prevent a building or an establishment from falling to ruin, nothing is done to arrest the march of destruction. If an edifice be shaken by an earthquake, it is abandoned,—it is seldom or never raised again on its foundations; a ruined building, like a felled oak, remains in the dust for ever. Even in the populous parts of some of the great cities of Syria the heaps of ruins which have been left in the pathways by successive earthquakes have not been removed. A few hours' labour would clear the wrecks away, but the passengers prefer to clamber up and down the piles of stones and fragments rather than to displace them.

In the preceding year three hundred soldiers had died at the khan, abovementioned, of the cholera, and were thrown into the Jordan; for which reason the consular agent at Safed gravely advised me not to drink of the water without first putting an onion into it.

As the people of the caravan made their arrangements to pass the night by the Jordan, I resolved to follow their example, and benefit by their neighbourhood. On the brow of the hill, beneath a rock, I have propped a blanket upon sticks and spread my carpet under it. The camels are stalking over the herbage about me, and the merchants sitting in the midst of the little fortifications they have made of their bales. I can trace the river from Lake Hoole nearly to Gennesareth; and before me rise in great beauty the mountains I have just left,—"the lot of the children of Naphtali;" and here were their outgoings.

A little stream flows with a murmuring sound over a stony bed close to my tent; and in it are collected millions of frogs, making a noise that rings through the valley as loudly as the strokes upon so many anvils could do. I crept quietly to the bank of it, and found a chorus of six upon one stone, exerting themselves so tremendously that I expected to see them fall to pieces. The humble frogs of our own country would scarcely have suggested such a fable as that of the ambitious one who emulated the bull; but here where they seem constantly engaged in that pursuit, and swell out in a most absurd manner, no wonder they should be chosen to convey such a moral.

March 5.—The croaking of the frogs denoted rain, which came down with great violence during the night, and joined with their clamour to keep me awake. At daylight I set off, and for more than an hour passed over a paved road, which, originally a most excellent way, is now, from its neglected state, rather a hindrance than an advantage. From the top of the hill, where the pavement ended, is a fine view of the Sea of Galilee and the heights about it; but the road was so miserable that I scarcely had leisure to observe the scenery. It appeared a bag full of large stones, between which the horses put their feet occasionally, and came down upon their knees. We did not meet a human being. What a picture of desolation!

When midway between the river and the village of Kuneitrah, we entered what in this country may be called a wood, generally of dwarf oaks lopped of their branches, which are carried away for fire. By the banks of a clear stream was a ruined wall, where a few Arab huts may have been. I sat down beneath it, in just such a spot as a knight-errant would have chosen to refresh himself in. The grass was green and rich, and the horses were allowed to roam among it, while we breakfasted upon cakes and figs, and scooped up the cool water with our hands. I was so pleased by the solitude and quiet of the place, which I never should have enjoyed had I waited for a caravan at Safed, that I could not avoid lecturing my squire, as Don Quixote might have done his under similar circumstances, upon the absurdity of company and guards through so deserted a country, who could only torment by their attentions, and thwart by their idleness or obstinacy.

I had just finished my oration when a shot was fired from behind: the ball whizzed over my head, and struck a stone on the opposite side. The Turk set off to catch the horses, while Hassan and I jumped up and peeped over the wall. Nobody was to be seen, and all was as still as before. I had nothing more to say in behalf of solitude, and prepared to leave my present retirement, when I perceived an Arab creeping through the trees, with a matchlock in his hand, endeavouring to reach the shelter of a hut that stood among them. We called to him, and when he stopped, advanced on foot to meet him. He had not had time to reload. I asked him to show me his gunpowder; and, observing that it was very bad, shook a quantity from my own flask into his hand, and, mounting on horseback, rode away, without saying one word about the shot. He stood for some time staring at us, and when we had got nearly out of sight, called several times to us to return. I had finished the adventure perfectly to my own satisfaction, and left him at a good trot. I have not the least idea whether or not the ball was

designed for any of my party; but this I may say, that I saw nothing else worth firing at.

We reached the village of Kuneitrah about four o'clock. On approaching it the scenery changes; the country is flatter and more plentifully wooded; a river flows over the plain before, and on the left hand towers the chain of Anti-Libanus, the white-headed Mount Hermon conspicuous above all. There has once been a wall round the village, but it has been beaten down by the rain, and the river has flooded all within it. As I stood with my handkerchief at my nose to reconnoitre the place—for it was more corrupt than any spot I had yet passed, and the whole way was strewed with dead animals—some women ran to the tops of their houses, and, waving a welcome to me, offered me lodging within them. "Come to mine, O Frank!" they all cried.

I was completely perplexed by this show of civility, for more squalid or forbidding damsels I never beheld. It was beginning to rain, and I had no alternative. One woman, more earnest than the rest, still stood aloft, holding together her long blue shift with her left hand, while with the other she beckoned to me to approach. All the dogs by this time, the pictures of famine, had scrambled to the top of the wall, and were howling most pitifully. I could not resist this united concert, and entered the village by a breach in the wall. Directly in front was a stagnant pool, and asses and cows, that had been dead some time, growing green about it.

I flew for shelter to the woman's hut, which stood in a cluster of others. At a little distance across the threshold lay a dead horse: she was pulling at its hind legs to make room for me to pass. I pushed away from her as if she had been a Gorgon. But there was no spot untainted in the place. I could stand it no more, and ran through the gate, which was close at hand, to the banks of the river, where I sat in the rain until Hassan should discover some abode for me, for the horses could go no farther, and I was not in a plight to weather the storms that were coming.

This is a post-town of Syria, it seems; and there is a hut for the couriers against the wall, to which they sent to invite me. I returned, therefore, and took advantage of this offer. Two dirty, sleepy-looking Tartars were smoking on the floor, and in an inner chamber stood their horses. The place had in some degree escaped the general pollution, but little was to be said for its cleanliness. We had a most smoky mess for dinner, to which I was able to add a fowl, the only living thing besides the people and the dogs, that had escaped the wreck of the village. It rained very hard during the night, and my post-house was assailed by a succession of travellers and their beasts, that filled it nearly to suffocation. One of the horses, finding himself crowded in the inner chamber, kicked his neighbour's out of the way, and came and lay down among us. Nobody was disposed to turn him out. I stretched my bed close in front of him, for he promised to be the most agreeable animal of the party; and lay until daylight *tête-à-tête* with him.

I followed a string of women through the broken wall of Kuneitrah, a little after dawn, to the banks of the river, whither they were tramping for water with vessels on their heads, and about their heels the most absurdly wide

trousers that ever were invented, which made them walk as if they had chains on their legs. These damsels, who live on the borders of the Paradise of Damascus, have as little of the houri in their appearance as can be imagined: they are precisely such spectres as one would expect to find in the filth and wretchedness they spring from. As they filed before me, I congratulated myself on having escaped the ministry with which their poverty induced them to threaten me.

In the flourishing days of Syria, the paved road, which now in many places is singularly preserved, must have been a most excellent one. Whenever I came to a remnant of any extent, I was able to trot briskly on; but where it is broken it affords the vilest path in the world. In the midst of the most difficult part of it we came in contact with a herd of pilgrims going to Jerusalem. There were three hundred at least, mounted on horses, mules, and asses. They were rolling and splashing about as if they had been in boats adrift in a storm. The women were perched astride upon their bedding and baggage, their feet in large yellow boots hanging over the animal's shoulders, muffled completely in veils and sheets.

We became so mingled, that I dismounted by a stunted oak tree, and stood there till they should pass. They were Armenians, and notwithstanding the solitude and labour of the way, kept their faces closely veiled. There was one, however, towards the end of the string, so exquisitely beautiful, that she ventured to show me her face, as a sample, perhaps, of the rest, or more likely because it was the only one worth such a display. I felt sorry almost that she had raised the curtain from so lovely a picture. I could do nothing but think of it. It brought to my memory Eudocia, in the siege of Damascus, who, with all her charms, was probably huddled in this very manner, on the pinnacle of her wardrobe, when flying from her apostate lover and the Saracens. I must not, however, endeavour to dissipate the romance of the East, for nothing is so necessary as to gild the uncomfortable realities that constantly come to shake it.

About three o'clock, with a train of mules laden with cotton from Nablous, I reached the town of Sasa. The wall was newly white-washed, and I was deceived into a belief that I should be well off there. About it were a few poplar trees, and among them some women were washing themselves in a stream that flowed from the river by which it stands. This was a novel sight, and gave me as favourable an impression of the people as the walls had done of the town. I determined, therefore, to finish my day's journey where there seemed to be so much cleanliness. A few green knolls gave a cheerful aspect to the place. On their heights strayed horses with their rich housings upon them, while the riders sat in picturesque parties at the bases.

The town had shared the same calamity, however, with less inviting spots; for, as I came nearer to the walls, I found the carcasses of dead animals even more numerous than at Kuneitrah. Camels, that appeared to have died with their loads on, were corrupting on the road. How can people contrive to breathe in such an atmosphere? No birds of prey, nor the jackall, nor the dogs,—ready enough to remove such a nuisance at all times,—have shown the least inclination to do so here. I rode into the only gate of the city; it

was choked up with mud. On each side was a colonnade used for a khan, equally filled with stagnant filth.

The inhabitants were lounging in a clear space in the midst of the city. I appeared so strangely among them, that they received me with shouts of laughter. I still wore the Frank dress, and every attempt I made to advance but increased their merriment. I stood very much perplexed in the midst of the facetious town for some minutes. There being no prospect of a lodging I turned my horse to go away, followed with shouts to the very gate. I was, in fact, fairly hooted out of the place, and plodded on towards Damascus with a very ill grace. The river had overflowed the bridge that crossed it, and we had some difficulty in accomplishing a passage. The road beyond was excellent, and we trotted on with some activity; Anti-Libanus stretching towards the Desert on the left hand, a few gentle hills rising from the plain to its base, but scarcely a village to be seen.

After two hours' ride the river ran at the bottom of a winding dell, in which were some beautiful spots of rich grass, covered over with sheep. I was inclined to establish myself for the night on one of them; but a few villages, at long intervals apart, promised food at any rate, if not more agreeable shelter. A clump of olive-trees, or lines of poplars, marked their situation. It is desolate to pass over so rich a country for so many hours without meeting with a habitation. Men cannot live in isolated situations here; they must flock together, and every paltry place must be defended by a wall.

It was just dusk when I entered a square building, in the midst of flocks and herds coming home for the night. They occupied the area in the centre, while the terrace ran round the top of the building, peopled to overflowing. I found an Arab reception in one of the huts, and feasted with the family by the side of a fire-place with a chimney to it. They are now common; for even Kuneitrah had chimneys to its miserable houses. The women cooked and served our dinners, and remained patiently in a corner till the crumbs which fall to their lot were ready for them.

I am so accustomed to recline upon a mat among insects and unsavoury smells, or to sit cross-legged at a pyramid of rice, scrambling with black fingers about it, that I feel in a moment as comfortable as if I were introduced to the most luxurious hotel in Europe. It is never possible to see more than half way through the mysterious chambers of an Arab hut. The only light falls from the door, which, standing on one side, scarcely gives a glimmer to the rest of the place, which is occupied with the singular furniture and cooking utensils, weapons, and different articles of food. We had not much space to sleep in; but a quieter spot than "Khan-el-Sheach" never existed.

The day was well up before we awoke; and, as my host insisted upon giving a breakfast of new bread and new milk, the sun had risen before we commenced our ride to Damascus. This khan is situated on the borders of the Barada, and called "El Sheach," from an aromatic plant very common about it, so named by the Arabs, and used by them for fuel. We were in the plain of Damascus, sown all over with barley, and watered by the Barada, and many streams flowing from it. The grain is kept for some time under water, as rice is, and low embankments of mud divide the plots,

which receive their allowance alternately. The river is now full, and appears of a good breadth. It rises sometimes very suddenly. This season some people were washed away by it, close to the khan in which I spent last night.

The mist that hung over the plain prevented my seeing Damascus till the sun was so high that its many domes and minarets glittered among the palm trees, that seemed to rival them in number, like a scene of enchantment. It appeared, indeed, an inviting spot; and contrasted with the rugged gray mountains behind it, and the desert valley before it, (for, although rich in grain, there is not a habitation to be seen but those of the city and its immediate suburb,) it gave me an idea of the magic doings of the genii, and looked as if it had been suddenly created. In this country there is no gradual improvement or increasing population as you approach a capital; the blood stagnates in the heart.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FROM ACRE TO JERUSALEM.—CARMEL.—ATHLETE.—CÆSAREA.—JAFFA.—RAMLAH.—ABOUGOSH.

THE only interest belonging to Acre centres in its historical associations. Richard and Saladin, the Crusaders and the Saracens, here rush upon the traveller's memory; and when the interval of centuries is forgotten, and the imagination is revelling in the scenes of days long passed away, his illusion rises to the vividness of reality as he sees dashing by him a gallant array of Turkish horsemen, with turbans and glittering sabres, as when they sallied forth to drive back the chivalry of Europe from the walls. Near the city is a mount still called by the name of Richard Cœur de Lion, and from which Napoleon, pointing to Acre, said to Murat, "The fate of the East depends upon yonder petty town." Constantinople and the Indies, a new empire in the East, and a change in the face of the whole world! Eight times he led his veteran soldiers to the assault; eleven times he stood the desperate sallies of the Mameluke sabres. British soldiers, under Sir Sydney Smith, came to the aid of the besieged; the ruins of a breached wall served as a breastwork, the muzzles of British and French bayonets touched each other, and the spear-heads of their standards were locked together. The bravest of his officers were killed, and the bodies of the dead soldiers lying around putrefied under the burning sun. The pasha (Djezzar the Butcher) sat on the floor of his palace, surrounded by a heap of gory heads, distributing money to all who brought in the heads of Frenchmen; and he who was destined to overturn every throne in Europe, was foiled under the walls of Acre. The town again sustained a long and bloody siege from Ibrahim Pasha, and when it fell into his hands, was given up to pillage and flames. He was greatly elated by his conquest, and deemed himself raised by it to a level with Napoleon's fame. The place was rebuilt by his orders, and fortified with skill and science by Suleiman Pasha (formerly Colonel Sève); and it was thought to be almost impregnable up to the moment when the astounding news arrived in Europe that it had been taken, after a bombardment of a few hours, by the allied fleet, in 1840.

The coast of Syria, everywhere dangerous, is nowhere more so than in the Bay of Acre. Vessels running in there for shelter are often stranded, their anchors finding no firm hold in the loose sandy bottom. The whole beach is strewed with melancholy and picturesque monuments of the sea's destructive power. Tall shattered prows, in which the sea-birds build their nests, project above the sands; some hulls, completely buried, show only their masts, looking like the crosses scattered over a Roman-catholic graveyard; a few still retain their yards, from which the mildewed cordage and canvass flap idly on the breeze. The Arabs never touch these wrecks, but leave them to perish by the slow agency of time and weather, or to be gradually buried under the sands. The proudest trophy of their power the elements have left on this shore, is the wreck of the Zebra. After every exertion on the part of her officers and crew to save this vessel, dismantled in the storm of December 1840, it was found advisable to hoist a sail on the stump of the bowsprit and direct her end on to the sandy beach. She was lifted on to it, high and dry, on the crest of the wave, like a Deal pilot boat, the operation being performed with all the silence, regularity, and precision of an ordinary manœuvre. Such is the English navy!

The Arab fishermen who frequent this bay, practice their art in the same way as their brethren in all the seas of Syria, Egypt and Arabia. The process is one of primitive simplicity, and has probably prevailed since the earliest times. The fisherman carries his net on his left arm, cleared and prepared for a throw; he grasps one end in his right hand, and taking advantage of the ripples made by the wind, and choosing his time and his position, so that the sun shines on the water without dazzling his eyes, he runs along the shore, or wades a little way from the beach, till he sees a shoal of fish; then with a gentle jerk, and without any noise, he throws the net, which opens and spreads as it falls; so that a little thing which could easily be put into a hat, expands sufficiently to cover a surface of twenty or thirty feet diameter. As he never throws till he sees something, he seldom makes an unsuccessful cast. This mode of fishing can only be practised on the Syrian coasts when the breeze is somewhat fresh; when the sea is calm the fisherman can see nothing beneath its dark polished surface; it is not till the sun shines through the elevated waves that their waters become transparent.

No part of the promised land creates a deeper interest in the traveller than the rich and extensive bosom of Mount Carmel. This celebrated mountain, the only great promontory on the low coast of Palestine, terminates a range of hills traversing Judea from S.E. to N.W. The scenes in its interior are often bold and romantic in the highest degree: deep and verdant precipices descending into lonely glens, through which a rivulet is dashing wildly; the herdsman and his flock on the long grassy slopes, that afford at present as rich pasture ground as in the days when Nabal fed his numerous herds in Carmel. There is indeed a character peculiarly pastoral about the scenery; few gray and naked rocks, or sublime but unprofitable cliffs, are here, as in the Mountain of the Temptation, or on Pisgah, but a beautiful carpet of grass and wild flowers, while the air is embalmed with the multitude of aromatic plants with which the mountain abounds.

On the summit and sides grow the pine, the oak, the olive, and the laurel. Standing beneath their pleasant shade,

"Where Carmel's flowery top perfumes the skies,"

the traveller looks round upon a noble panorama. To the north lie the plains of Acre, with the little city stretching out on a low point at the opposite horn of the bay, like a mere speck on the water; and beyond it are the mountains of Lebanon. To the west is the dark blue sea; and, tracing its shores to the south, the eye discerns the ruins of Cæsarea, the once proud city of Herod and of Cornelius the centurion, where Paul made Felix tremble; whilst to the south-east the view extends over the wide plain of Esdrælon.

The river Kishon, called *Nahr-el-Mokattam*, flows along the eastern base of the mountain. Here was the scene of Sisera's discomfiture. The stream rolls between its green and naked shores, unshaded by a solitary tree. In the dry season its waters are fordable, but when swollen with the rains it overflows its banks to some extent on each side, and runs with a deep and rapid current. It was probably in such a season that it proved fatal to a part of Sisera's routed army. It must have been on this side that the people were assembled when Ahab "gathered all Israel unto Mount Carmel," and when "the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice" which Elijah had prepared. The spot was finely chosen for the display of this wonderful spectacle; for to the multitudes assembled in the extensive plain of Esdrælon, and on the hill-sides of Samaria, Cana, and Gilboa, the scene must have been as distinct as if acted at their feet. The site on which the miracle was accomplished is clearly defined by circumstances: not so those other localities which monkish tradition affects to associate with the various events in th life of the prophet. The grotto is pointed out in which he is said to have lived, the place where he slew the priests of Baal, and so forth. Not far from the supposed residence of Elijah there is a basin of water filled by a stream that flows down the side of the descent, and around the brink are found various stones, in which a willing imagination may discover the resemblances of different kinds of fruit, water melons, apples, pears, olives, bunches of grapes, &c. The legend runs that a garden once grew on this spot, from the proprietor of which the prophet begged some fruit, but, being refused, invoked a curse on the man's churlishness; the wrath of Heaven thereupon converted all the fruit of the garden into stones. Quantities of these stones were formerly carried back to Europe by devout pilgrims, and they are still collected, and offered for sale to the credulous on many parts of the coast. They are calcareous; some of them are hollow and crystallised within. In all probability they are petrifications made by the action of the water on the droppings of animals that frequent the spring. Gazelles appear to furnish the grapes, and the wild boar is instrumental in the deposit of a larger description of fruit. Major Skinner picked up some specimens of the former, in which the process of conversion into stone was not yet completed, and that plainly put the matter beyond doubt: but his explanation of the miracle was received with pitying contempt by the good padre who accompanied him on his ramble to the spot. Similar legends are related of other localities in the Holy Land. On the way from Bethlehem to Jerusalem,

Mr. Stephens crossed a stony field, by which, as the Christian boy he had taken for a guide told him, the Virgin once passed and asked for beans: the owner of the field told her there were none; and to punish him for his falsehood and lack of charity, the beans were all changed into stone, and the country had remained barren ever since. Paul, Mr. Stephens's servant, had been twice to Bethlehem without seeing this field, and he immediately dismounted and joined the boy in searching for the holy petrifactions. "It was wonderful," said Paul, as he picked up some little stones, as much like beans as any thing else; "and see, too, how barren the country is!"

The narrow and romantic valley pointed out, whether truly or not, by tradition, as the spot where the stern and faithful messenger of heaven resided, is a suitable scene for the abode of such an inhabitant; an utter and sublime solitude, shut in between the lofty declivities, whose rugged sides, and the brilliant sky above, are all that the eye can discern. Of the caves called the grottoes of Elijah and the prophets, the principal one has evidently been excavated by the hand of man in the hard rock. It is a lofty hall, with no other prospect than that of the boundless sea, and where no sound is heard save the hoarse murmur of the waves that break upon the base of the cliff. The whole region was an impressive exile for the Carmelite monks who formerly dwelt here: the fascinations of the world could never enter within the formidable barriers that rise on every side: the distant and busy hum could never be heard: the murmur of the sea, to which the valley opens, and the cry of the eagle from the rocks above, were the only sounds that broke on the silence of their dwelling; "And here," says an old chronicler, "all these bees of the Lord gathered up the gifts of heaven, and prepared the honey of eternity."

The monastery on Mount Carmel was pillaged and destroyed by the Arabs after the retreat of the French army from the siege of Acre; the latter having used it for an hospital for their sick and wounded, while their operations were carrying on. It is now rebuilt in a style worthy of the place where it stands, and is, like the mountain itself, the best in the Holy Land. It towers in dazzling whiteness upon the highest platform of the mountain, and its interior is really beautiful. The architect was Fra Battista, one of the brethren of the convent, a very able and excellent man. However sceptical the traveller may be as regards the other marvels exhibited to him by the monks, there is one prodigy within their walls which he will not fail to behold with full and admiring satisfaction, viz., beds and bed-rooms in the European fashion, a rare spectacle in Syria. "I could hardly believe my own eyes," says Mr. Stephens, "when I saw in rooms provided for travellers, French bedsteads, with curtains, and French dressing-tables. The rules of their order forbid the Carmelite friars to eat meat; but they set me down to such a dinner, to say nothing of the wines of Mount Lebanon, that, as far as regarded the eating and drinking merely, I was glad I had not invited myself to dine with my friend the consul at Caiffa. From my seat at the table I looked out upon the distant sea; the monks were all gathered round me, kind, good men, happy to receive and talk with a stranger; and it is no extravagance to say, that after having been buffetted about for months, I felt at the moment that I could be almost willing to remain with them for

ever. I ought not to tell it, but the fact is, the extraordinary comfort of the convent, and the extraordinary beauty of the scene, drove away all the associations connected with this gathering-place of the prophets. I wanted nothing but what I saw before me. The monks told me there was fine shooting on the mountain. I could throw myself into the clearest of waters, and bathe, or with my little boat could glide over to Caiffa or Acre. For an invalid in search of retirement, with every beauty that clima and natural scenery can offer, I know no place superior to the convent at Mount Carmel. It is one of the few places where a man could be cheerful and happy in perfect seclusion. Books, the mountain, the sky, and the sea, would be companions enough. For a *very* young couple it would be "the sweetest spot on earth to test the strength of their poetic dreams."

*The Ruins of Athlete**.—Journeying south from Carmel, we† had seen since the morning, on the horizon before us, on the edge of the sea, a vast column glittering in the sun, which seemed to spring from the waves, as we approached. We find it is a confused mass of magnificent ruins, belonging to different eras; first of all we distinguish an immense wall, perfectly similar, from its form and the chiselling of its stones, to a portion of the Coliseum at Rome; behind it we soon discover the beautifully-fretted remains of a Moorish monument, a church, or a mosque, or perhaps both in turn; then a series of other remains of divers ancient buildings yet standing, and in good preservation. The sandy road which our guides pursued, led us pretty near this curious relic of the past, the existence, name, and date of which we were completely unacquainted with. About half a mile from this group of monuments, the sea-coast rises, and the sand turns to rock; this rock has been cut by the hand of man, on all sides, for about a mile in circumference. It might be called a primitive town, scooped out of the rock, before mankind had learnt the art of raising stones from the ground, and erecting dwellings on its surface; it is, in fact, one of those subterranean towns of which the earliest histories speak, or at least one of those vast *necropolises*, the cities of the dead, which in every direction undermined the earth or the rocks, in the vicinity of the cities of the living; but the form of the rocks, and of the numberless caverns cut in their sides, indicates rather, in my opinion, the abodes of a living people. These caverns are of great extent, with elevated entrances, approached by broad steps; openings are pierced also in the rock to give light to the habitations, and these entrances and openings, doors and windows, open upon streets deeply cut in the bowels of the hill. We tracked several of these deep and wide streets, still marked by the traces of chariot wheels. A multitude of eagles and vultures, and innumerable flocks of starlings, started from every nook at our approach. Climbing plants, wall-flowers, clusters of the myrtle and the fig, have taken root in the soil of these stone streets, and carpet the long avenues. In some places the ancient inhabitants had entirely levelled the hill, and dug canals to the sea, through which glimpses are obtained of a part of the gulf behind the town. It is a landscape of an entirely novel character, stern and harsh, when we look upon the rock—smiling and bright, when we gaze upon the aërial streaks on the blue

* Called by the chroniclers Petra Incisa, and Castel Pellegrino. † Lamartine.

ocean, and upon the multitude of plants springing spontaneously from the crevices of the stone.

We wound for some time through these wonderful labyrinths, and arrived at last at the foot of the great wall and the Moorish monuments, which we had before us; there we stopped an instant to deliberate. These ruins have an evil reputation; bands of Arab robbers frequently conceal themselves there to pillage and massacre caravans. We had been warned at Caiffa to avoid them, or to pass them in battle array, and permitting none of our men to stray from the body of the caravan. Curiosity had prevailed; we had been unable to resist the desire of visiting monuments, of which ancient and modern history knows nothing. We were ignorant whether they were deserted or inhabited. When arrived near the outer wall which still encircles them, we perceived a breach by which we might enter. At the same moment a group of Arabs on horseback appeared, lance in hand, upon the sands between us and the opening, and came down upon us. We were taken by surprise, but were ready for all that, with our double-barrelled guns primed and cocked in our hands, and pistols in our belts. We advanced; the Arabs stopped short. We opened a parley with them, and the sheikh and his principal followers escorted us themselves as far as the breach, and gave orders to the Arabs inside not to molest us. I nevertheless judged it prudent to take only a part of our troop into the interior; the rest remained encamped at a gunshot from the hill, ready to come to our aid if we should fall into an ambuscade. This precaution was not useless, for we found within the walls a population of 200 or 300 Arabs, including women and children. There was only one passage to get out of the ruins, and we might have been easily taken and butchered, if the barbarians had not been held in awe by the force which stayed outside, and which they supposed more considerable than it was in reality.

As soon as we had got through the breach, we found ourselves in a labyrinth of paths turning round the crumbling ruins of the great wall, and the other ancient edifices that we successively discovered. These paths or streets had no regular form, but the steps of the Arabs, the camels, and the goats, had beaten them at random amongst the rubbish. The families of the tribe had built nothing themselves, but had simply taken advantage of all the cavities which the displacing of monstrous blocks had caused here and there, to shelter themselves within, some under the tops of columns or capitals, arrested in their fall by other ruins, and others under an awning of black cloth of goat's hair, stretched from one pillar to another, and thus forming a roof. The sheikh himself, his wives and children, who occupied doubtless the palace of the village, had their abode at the entrance of the town, amidst the ruins of a Roman temple upon a very high elevation, standing above the path by which we entered. Their dwelling was formed by a huge block of sculptured stone, which hung almost perpendicularly, supported at one of its angles by other blocks, rolled pell-mell together, and stopping each other, as it were, in their fall. This confused mass of stones seemed in reality as if still giving way, and about to crush the women and children of the sheikh, who showed their heads above us, thrust out of this artificial cavern. The females were not veiled; they had no other garment than a chemise of blue

cotton, which left the neck and legs uncovered, and was bound round the body by a belt of leather. The children were naked, sitting astride on the blocks that formed the roofs of these frightful dwellings; and some black goats, with long pendant ears, had climbed up beside the children, upon the wall of the grottoes, and gazed at us as we passed, or bounded over our heads, clearing, from block to block, the deep path in which we were walking. We saw a few camels lying here and there in the cool hollows, formed in the interstices of the ruins, and rearing their pensive and tranquil heads over the trunks of the shivered columns and capitals. At every step the scene was novel, and drew our attention more powerfully. A painter would have found a thousand subjects quite new to his art, in the ever-varying and striking manner in which the dwellings of the tribe were mingled and confounded with the remains of theatres, baths, churches, and mosques, which strew this spot of earth. Women were milking their she-goats on the steps of an amphitheatre; flocks of sheep were jumping one by one from the deep window of an emir's palace, or of a Gothic church, of the time of the Crusades. Arabs, seated cross-legged, were smoking their pipes under the carved arch of a Roman fabric, and the camels were tethered to the Moorish piazzas of a harem gateway.

We dismounted to visit in detail the principal remains. The Arabs made a great show of opposition when we were about to enter the circuit of a temple at the end of the town, upon a rock near the edge of the sea. We had a new dispute at each court, at each wall that we had to get over to reach it, and were obliged to employ even threats to force them to yield up the passage. The women and children retired, pouring on us a flood of abuse; the sheikh and the other Arabs showed in their features and gestures the strongest marks of discontent; but the indecision and ill-disguised timidity which we detected in their behaviour encouraged us to insist; and partly by fair means, partly by force, we made our way into the interior of this last and most astounding of the monuments.

I cannot tell what it is; there is something of every order in its construction, form, and ornaments; I am inclined to believe that it is an ancient temple converted by the Crusaders into a church, at the time when they had possession of Cæsarea in Syria and its neighbouring coasts, and that the Arabs at a later period turned it into a mosque. Time, which sports with the productions and thoughts of men, is now changing it to dust, and the knee of the camel bends upon those flags on which the knees of three

or four generations in religion have bent in their turns, before different gods. Through the broken walls glimpses are seen of the sea, and the reefs that skirt it. Climbing plants hang in leafy and flowery tufts from the tops of the broken arches, and birds with scarlet necks, and flocks of small blue swallows, were chirping in these aërial arbours, or fluttering along the cornices. Nature takes up her hymn where man has ended his.

It was not far from this place that another traveller fell in with a more friendly tribe of these Nomade Arabs of western Syria, who occupy a middle place in the scale of civilisation between the Bedouins and the Fellahs. "Before dark," he says, "we reached an encampment of black tents, situated in a hollow among trees. As I was about to make my *debut* in an Arab camp, Hassan, afraid that I might betray ill-manners, whispered to me, 'On no account ask hospitality. We must take it as a matter of course.' With perfect confidence, therefore, I rode up to the best-looking tent of the tribe, and dismounting established myself within it. The women and the children were all employed in driving in the animals, and I sat for some minutes without being perceived.

Nomade Arabs of Syria.

"At length the master of the tent came in, and observing that I was a Christian merely said, 'Good evening, you are welcome;' and instantly ordered a fire to be made. A large hole was dug at the mouth of the tent, and in a very few minutes we had a famous blaze. I spread my carpet in front of it, and awaited the dinner that I had overheard our host order. His family occupied the next division to the one wherein we were seated, which I found was destined for the young of the flocks. The lambs and the kids were brought in, and tied to pegs in the ground; some of the smallest being allowed to go loose and play about. The goats and sheep were driven to some distance; and the constant barking of the dogs showed that they were well watched. A partition of reeds covered with cloth divided us from the women and children, who were chattering away and making cakes at a great rate.

"The hour of dinner at length arrived. The men knelt at the door of the tent and prayed for some minutes, while the women brought in messes of milk and hot cakes. My share was half-a-dozen of the latter and a large bowl of sweet milk, to which I did ample justice.

"It rained very hard all night; and with my feet to a log of wood that had been thrown on the fire before we prepared for rest, I slept so soundly

that I did not notice until day broke the strange bed-fellows with whom my travelling had brought me acquainted. The kids and lambs that had been left loose had collected together upon my blanket, some underneath and some above it. One had perched like the night-mare upon my breast, and another had taken possession of my pillow so completely that I must have rested my head frequently upon it during the night. The ewes had just been milked, and loosed from their tether, rushed into the tent to recover the young they had been deprived of during the night. I was nearly swept away in the confusion of recognition.

"The milking of the ewes is a most expeditious matter. Opposite each tent two lines of them are drawn up face to face. A rope being fastened firmly round the neck of the first of the file, is then passed round that of every other, until secured to the stump on the other extremity, drawing them all so closely together, that each looks over its opposite neighbour's shoulder. A crowd of women, their bowls in their hands, stand ready, and the moment the last knot is tied, to work they go, and finish the affair in much less time than it would take you to drink one of the bowls out. A more expeditious or convenient plan can hardly be conceived.

"The churns are not so deserving of commendation, for indeed there is little of the cleanliness of the dairy in the process of making butter. Close to the milking-ground is a triangle of wood, in which hangs an ox hide, having at each end of it two small sticks for handles. When the milk is put into this skin, two women draw it backward and forward between them, and in this manner make the sweetest butter in the world. When it is ready they dash their long arms into the skin and scoop it out, occasionally sweeping their ragged locks from their brows as they pass the butter to the bowls. Though prepared by no 'neat-handed Phillis,' I breakfasted on such a mess with great satisfaction; I was a little puzzled at first on which side and in what manner to butter my bread, till my companions led the way by rubbing their cakes every now and then into the bowl: thus initiated into the mystery of eating Arab bread and butter, I made great progress.

"I should never be tempted to lead a pastoral life among these nut-brown maids. The men are generally handsome; but the women, after they are grown up, become exceedingly ugly. Those about fourteen or fifteen years are round-faced plump little things, full of smiles and good humour. They have reached maturity at that age, and discretion too, I fancy, as much as they are ever likely to acquire."

Mount Carmel ends two miles south of the wretched village of Tantoura, the ancient Dor or Adora, once a place of great strength. Where the mountain ends the Valley of Sharon commences, and extends as far as Jaffa. Two hours beyond Tantoura we crossed a small river, which the guide told us contained crocodiles; and I should have been more inclined to believe him, if he had not added that "they ate men"—a thing altogether incredible in so northern a latitude, where, if they exist at all, they cannot be much larger than lizards. That they exist in the stream is probably not a pure invention of the Arabs, but a belief founded on tradition; for Breidenbach relates, that on the east side of Cæsarea is a lake abounding with crocodiles. It is possible that they were brought thither, as they were to Rome, for the amusement of the people, when Cæsarea had its amphitheatre.

And where is Cæsarea now? You may search for it beneath yonder little mounds that are barely marked upon the surface; so lowly, they could scarcely serve to hide the remains of a peasant's cot. There the proud city of Herod lies entombed, and it should seem as if the very stones had rotted in the soil!

The town of Jaffa stands on a hill that rises abruptly from the sea, from which at some distance it has a very picturesque appearence; though on closer inspection it appears a miserable place: but it has a fine climate, and a fine country round it, and the orange gardens are the most luxuriant on the shores of the Mediterranean. It is popularly believed to have existed before the deluge, and to have been the city where Noah dwelt and built his ark: it was the port whence Jonah embarked for Tarshish when he was thrown overboard and swallowed by a whale; and St. Jerome himself does not disdain to record the heathen tradition which made the rocks of Jaffa the scene of Andromeda's exposure to the monster, and of her rescue by Perseus. But a more recent and a gloomier association attached to the name of this town belongs to Napoleon's history—the poisoning of the French invalids, and the massacre of four thousand prisoners.

The ancient harbour of this sole seaport of Judea is still traceable, and the rocks that formed the pier rise high out of the sea which breaks upon them with tremendous violence. This pier was evidently an artificial construction, and, although no mortar was used in the building of it, yet the joinings have become filled up, and the whole forms a continuous mass resembling that at Rhodes and Tyre, though it is much smaller than the latter. The ships of Solomon, at least those trading on the Mediterranean, could not therefore have been very large or numerous, or they could not have found accommodation in this harbour. In common with all the cothons of that period it is now so filled up with sand as only to allow an entrance to the small coasting craft. Trade was rather brisk at the time of our visit, and the place seemed thriving. The imports were mostly pilgrims and corn for the Pasha's army; and the exports chiefly fruits from the neighbouring gardens. There is a good bazaar, and the gate on the land side is remarkably handsome, and beside it stands a noble Turkish fountain, formed of various-coloured marbles pouring forth jets of the purest water. It furnishes a good specimen of the gate of an Eastern town, having within it the seat of judgment, as well as the receipt of custom, and was guarded by a strong military force, that formed a pleasing group as they surrounded its marble deewan.

For nearly two miles after leaving the town, our road lay through the richest and most beautiful garden of orange and lemon trees, then covered with fruit and flowers, and tall waving cypresses, corals, and fragrant mimosas; intersected with enormous nopals or prickly pears, with the scammony in flowers twining through their invulnerable armour. We saw extensive water-melon beds, the fruit of which having just come to maturity, were guarded by men sitting under temporary sheds erected for the purpose: the sight immediately brought to our recollection Isaiah's striking image of loneliness, "The daughter of Zion is left as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers (c. i., v. 5). The water-melons or *pasteques* grown here, are peculiar to the district of Jaffa, and are said to degenerate if transplanted elsewhere.

They are justly celebrated throughout the Levant for their exquisite flavour and their refreshing coolness.

From hence to Ramlah, our way lay again through the plain of Sharon, one of the most fertile and beautiful in the East. Although not a sixth part of it is cultivated, yet where it was tilled the crops looked most luxuriant. Upon a space of ten or twelve acres, I observed fourteen ploughs at work; and so simple and light is the construction of these implements, that the husbandman, when returning from his labour in the evening, takes his plough home upon his shoulder. The share is of wood, and armed only at the end with a tooth or point of iron, which of course does little more than scratch the ground. The beam is very slender, as well as the rude handle by which it is directed. I do not think we passed a dozen head of cattle of any kind; but the monotony of the plain is occasionally relieved by groves and clumps of aged and magnificent olives, which give it quite the appearance of a well laid-out English park or demesne. Most of these olives must be centuries old, from their great size and proverbial slowness of growth; and are probably the lineal descendants of those we read of in David's time, which were so plentiful in the low plains, that Baal Hanan, the Gadite, was placed as overseer over them. Numbers of tall white storks paced about through the groves, like so many spectres, enjoying their solitary grandeur amid the scenes of other days. The day was delightful; a light breeze refreshing the traveller and the weary pilgrim as they journeyed to the Holy City; the fields were decked with thousands of gay flowers, the scarlet anemone, and a beautiful specimen of small red tulip, intermingled with the white cistus,* the pink phlox, and the blue iris, and with crimson and white asters, asphodels and lilies, forming an enamelled carpet that perfumed the air, and offered a scene replete with everything that could gratify the eye or charm the imagination. This plain of Sharon is about fifteen miles broad, and nearly twice as many long, bordered on the one side by the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and the rugged hill-country of Judea on the other. Writers who have described the "goodly land" of Palestine as so unfertile as to warrant the assertion of Voltaire, that he would not receive a present of it from the sultan, can never have beheld the plain of Sharon when arrayed in the lovely garb of spring. After harvest, indeed, the scene changes, when the sun scorches up every trace of herbage, leaving the red soil exposed, with nothing to break the melancholy monotony of its aspect except the pale foliage of an olive, or the motionless shade of a mastic.

Ramlah, the ancient Arimathæa, the city of "Joseph the counsellor, the good man and just," is a wretched dilapidated place, but exhibits marks of having once been a more extensive and flourishing town than it is at present. The only monument of importance belonging to it is the Martyr's Tower, situated about a quarter of a mile from the town. It is attached to a building of great extent, consisting of rows of Gothic arches like cloisters, and has itself much the appearance of one of our old cathedral towers. The view from the top is very splendid.

An incident honourable to human nature which distinguished this place in 1101, still throws a degree of interest round its mouldering walls. The king

* The rose of Sharon is supposed to have been a cistus.

of Jerusalem having with a train of 200 horse imprudently attacked an army of several thousand Egyptian invaders, had been forced to take refuge with his little band in the castle of Ramlah, the fortifications of which were too weak to allow of even a hope of their making good their defence on the morrow. But an Arab prince, who acted with the Egyptian army as an auxiliary, stole out of the camp by night, and obtaining access to the king, offered to conduct him to a place of safety, at the same time informing him that the Egyptians had determined to put every soul in the castle to death.

Some months before this the king had made a successful foray beyond Jordan, surprised the tents of the Arabs in the middle of the night, and carried off their women and children prisoners, besides an innumerable multitude of asses and camels. The men seeing the approach of the enemy had all leapt on their horses and plunged into the desert. The Franks immediately commenced their retreat, the captives and cattle marching in the van. Among the former they presently recognised an illustrious lady, the wife of a powerful prince of the country, and who was in hourly expectation of making him a father. The moment he heard of her situation, king Baldwin stopped, had her taken off the camel on which she rode, prepared a comfortable bed for her of part of the spoils, gave her a supply of provisions and two skinfuls of water, a maiden to attend her, and two she-camels to give her milk; and lastly, wrapped her up carefully in his own cloak, sprang on his horse, and departed. That very evening the Arab prince, following the track of the Christians, his heart bleeding for the loss of his wife, and under such peculiarly painful circumstances, came unexpectedly to the spot where she lay—with her new-born child. What a meeting!

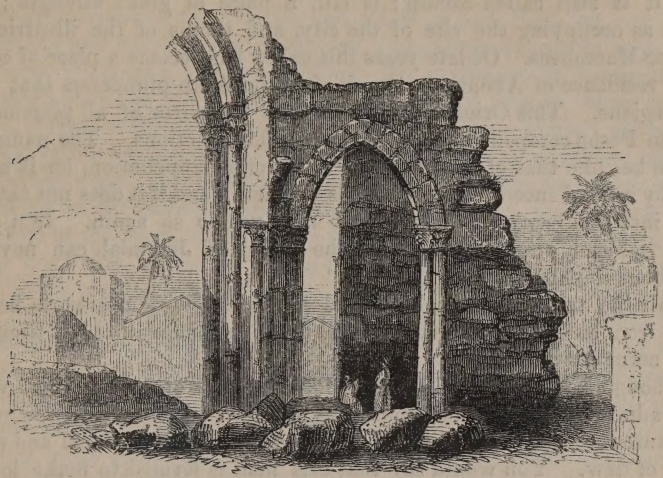
It was the grateful husband and father who now risked his own life to recompense this rare act of humanity. His offer was accepted; he guided the king to the mountains, and, quitting him there with renewed professions of his gratitude and personal good wishes, returned to the camp, while Baldwin, with the utmost difficulty, and after much suffering from thirst and hunger, found his way to his friends at Arsur.

About four miles from Ramlah, to the left of the road to Jerusalem, is Ludd, the ancient Lydda, a considerable village of small houses, but with nothing to distinguish it from ordinary Mohammedan villages, except the ruins of the celebrated church of St. George. Here the saint is said to have suffered martyrdom; and the church built over his grave is ascribed to the piety of Richard Cœur de Lion—but on very questionable authority.

The plain on which Ramlah stands extends further eastward for about five or six miles, and the land rises in gentle slopes towards the mountains, still however retaining its verdure, its beauty, and its fertility. The hill-country is entered by a narrow pass at a place called Ladron, where are the remains of an old fort and Gothic arches of an old church. The former was probably erected as a resting-place, and also as a defence for the pilgrims, as this spot has ever been the haunt of the Arab robbers.

When we had reached the hill-country of Judea, a complete change came over the scene. The eye was no longer refreshed with the verdant sward and the beauty of the plain we had traversed after leaving Joppa; the hum of bees, the low of cattle, and even the music of the goat's bell was no longer

heard. A solemn wildness reigns in these elevated regions, the hills of which rise in concentric circles, one above another, the naked strata of gray



Church of St. George, Ludd.

limestone protruding at regular intervals like so many seats in a stadium. The road was a mere horse-track, rough and stony as if it had been the bed of a river; but the dreariness and monotony of the view were occasionally relieved by valleys and ravines clothed with low woods of dwarf oak, which was then putting forth its young leaves and long green catkins. Every place seemed admirably adapted for robbery; but we passed all the defiles without meeting with a human being.

While musing upon the great events of which this country has been the seat, I was struck by the announcement of mid-day from a little mosque on a peak in the midst of the wildest part of the hills. Although it came from a Mohammedan minaret, there was something deeply impressive in the exclamation "God is great!"—the only sound that broke the almost death-like stillness of the grand solitudes through which we were filing.

About midway to Jerusalem, we passed through a deep narrow gorge, wooded to an extent that we could scarcely have imagined, from the rocky and barren desert in which it was situated. The ascent out of this valley is fearfully precipitous, and has long been noticed in modern history as the hiding-place or fastness of the lawless Bedouin. A large band of Ibrahim Pasha's cavalry was here completely destroyed. The huge rocks, the close wood on either side, and the overhanging crags, form a complete cover for the enemy, who might attack the largest body of men passing through it, while they would remain secure from harm, especially from horsemen. This valley is probably the Bethhoron of Scripture: ascending from it the traveller again enters upon the rugged Apennine country, from whose heights he has a last glimpse of the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

We next arrived at the Valley of Jeremiah—on all hands a melancholy

solitude! Here, it has been conjectured, stood the village in which the prophet was born. At one end of it is a castle, singularly situated on a rock; it is still called Modin; is still a place of great strength; and is known as occupying the site of the city, and tombs of the illustrious and patriotic Maccabees. Of late years this valley has become a place of celebrity as the residence of Abougosh, the chief of the Arab plunderers that inhabit these regions. This Oriental Rob Roy was the terror of all pilgrims, until Ibrahim Pasha compelled him to desist from his exactions. The name would seem to be, like that of Cæsar, a sort of honorary appellation, for it has been borne by several successive generations of chiefs; and if it does not now strike terror into the hearts of pilgrims, it may yet do so again. In a country like Syria, such a robber's hold as the Valley of Jeremiah can never long be without its Abougosh.

Of all the travellers who have had interviews with Abougosh before he retired from business, none have so well described the man as Dr. Richardson, whose account we abridge.

"Abougosh is rather under the middle size, but of a robust and vigorous make, admirably formed for supporting fatigue; his complexion is swarthy, his features regular and animated, with a fine dark eye, placid and moist as a drop of dew. You would say that this man is formed to make love, and captivate the hearts of his species; better fitted for the bower than the field —more a Paris than a Hector. His manner was singularly calm and self-possessed: when he spoke the man was rarely revealed in his countenance; a secret purpose lurked in the bottom of his eye, that showed his heart had other game than what was started by his tongue. We looked, admired, and looked again. Is this the man who rules the Arabs—of whom even the Turkish governors are afraid?

"Having accepted the chief's hospitable invitation we followed him to his house, which is pleasantly situated on the east side of the valley, and resembles very much the mansion and offices of a wealthy farmer in this country, having much accommodation for men, horses, and cattle, without regard to taste or appearance. The sun was sinking beneath the horizon as we entered the substantial dwelling, and were led into the principal room which was fitted up in the usual Eastern style. One small window illuminated the apartment; but it was now beginning to get dark, and the light of the sun was succeeded by that of a farthing-candle.

"On the appearance of dinner, the farthing-candle was exchanged for one of larger dimensions, set upon the floor; the dinner was also set down on the floor at our feet, and we hitched down from the sofa to eat it. It consisted of a great profusion of rice, boiled fowl, different kinds of boiled and minced meat and rice mixed together, forming a kind of sausage, enclosed in the skin of a gourd, resembling a cucumber, and several other trifling articles, all of which were so admirably seasoned, that having tasted of one, we had no disposition to quit it for another, and when we had done so, were as little inclined to return or change it for a third or fourth; yet most of us, I believe, were induced to try a little of each of them, and became such proselytes to Arab cookery, that we protested in good earnest, we should wish to dine so every day of our lives, as far as eating was concerned; though neither roast

beef nor plum-pudding was among the dishes. Not so with respect to the auxiliary implements of feeding, which were rather of an awkward description, though ancient as our mouths, and all of us had them on our finger-ends. Forks and knives there were none, and only one spoon to help a little leben or sour milk upon the rice. When the invitation to commence the attack issued from the lips of our landlord, we looked at each other, as much as to say, 'How shall we proceed?' The good man himself sat by, and out of respect for his guests did not mean to partake of anything till they were satisfied, which, Lord Belmore perceiving, immediately requested that he would set us the example, and pressing him thereto, then, 'Bismillah!' in the name of the Lord, he tucked up the long dangling sleeves of his shirt as far as his elbow, thrust his washed hand into the mountain of rice that smoked before him, and, having taken a handful, formed it into an oblong ball, by folding his fist; this being done, he put his finger and thumb behind it, thrust it into his mouth and down his throat in the twinkling of an eye. Then he tore off the leg of a fowl, part of which immediately followed the rice, the rest was returned into the plate to serve the next comer to the dish. Again he returned to the rice, and again to the fowl or the beef, judiciously alternating layer upon layer, handling, mouthing, and swallowing, and hospitably inviting us to follow his example, and instructing us how to ball the rice and thrust it into our mouths. No ceremony or city civilisation here. His brother followed at a distance, and did not begin till after much entreaty; but once engaged, played as good a fist as Abougosh himself. Thus we all went on eating, talking, laughing, and enjoying ourselves, till abundant repletion taught us to desist. Then, *Alham de lilla*, glory to God, we are satisfied; and a servant comes round with a pitcher full of water, part of which he pours upon our hands; we wash, and it falls into the basin below; then, having dried, he receives the towel, and goes round to perform the same ceremony to the next, and thus makes the tour of the company.

"Next morning we left our beds at an early hour; but the earliest of the party was preceded by Abougosh. On going to the top of the stairs, where a low wall between the two houses furnished a charming prospect of the valley below, I found him sitting on his heels in the shade, although the sun had scarcely shone on his abode. He had just taken his pipe from his lips to address a party of men whom he had called around him, and whom, it appeared, he was about to dispatch on some piratical expedition. He saluted me kindly on my approach, and invited me to sit down beside him. The servant immediately brought me a pipe and a cup of coffee, which I continued to enjoy, while Abougosh proceeded in his instructions to his attendants. Here the man was all alive, his sleeping energies were roused, every faculty of his soul was braced, and every fibre of his body in action; the muddy reserve was cleared from the bottom of his eyes, which shot forth a keen and living intelligence, that pierced the inmost soul of his hearers. I did not understand the third of what he said; but his looks and gestures spoke folios, and would have explained themselves to the deaf. At length the conference ended, the attendants withdrew, and Abougosh smoothing up his face laid his energies once more asleep."

From the long and sterile valley of Jeremiah, the road passes through a narrow gullet into a smaller tract, wherein are a few villages and patches of vineyards. At the end of the defile runs a brook into the valley of Elah, or the Terebinthine Valley, whence it is said David picked up the stones with which he slew Goliath; on the left hand rose the hills towards Samaria, bleak and desolate. The road now becomes more rocky, the scene more wild and cheerless, and no object presents itself to arrest the traveller's attention, or to beguile for a moment his impatience for the first sight of the Holy City. At length it opens upon him at the issue from a defile. The view of it from this approach is sudden and near, and for that reason, perhaps, more impressive than if the mind had been prepared for it by a more distant vision. The first involuntary exclamation that bursts forth, is that which prophecy has said shall be in the mouth of "all that pass,"—"Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" It is impossible that any delineation can be more just or any image more vivid than is contained in these few words; "How doth the city sit solitary!" The sight carried across a tract of gray, desolate, and barren rock, and the ruins of the Muslim burial-ground, with crumbling tombs on every hand, rests upon

Jerusalem.

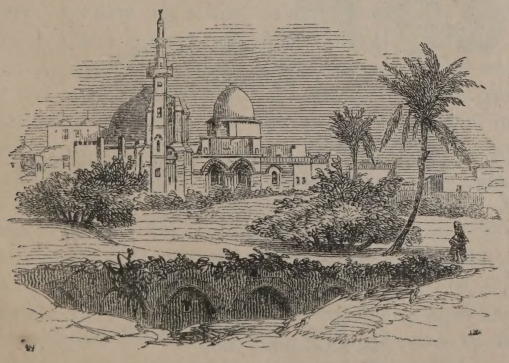
a bare dead wall, above which little is seen but the graceless domes of houses, and the tops and minarets of a few mosques, and the wild hills in the distance beyond Jordan, at the foot of which lies the Dead Sea. Scarcely a sign of vegetation can be traced, with the exception of the leaden green of a few ragged olives; and the city, placed on the brow of the hill, as if an object for observation, looks as if a portion of it had fallen down the steep, and presents one of the most gloomy and melancholy spectacles that imagination can conceive.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JERUSALEM.—CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.—ENVIRONS OF THE CITY.

AT length "our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!—Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." As we enter the Bethlehem or Yaffa gate we have on our left a small wheat-field in which there is an oblong pit twenty feet deep, and lined coarsely with small stones. This my cicerone informed me was the pool of Hezekiah, and the place where Bathsheba had bathed. "And where," said I, "was David?"—"Standing at that window, up there," he replied, with the utmost gravity, pointing at the same time to a small iron grating in one of the square towers near the gate. The man was not a very trustworthy authority on matters of history: for when he showed me a house in which he said Bonaparte had resided, and I asked him when was it Bonaparte had been in the country, he answered, "In the time of our Lord." * I chanced afterwards to enter the tower, which served as a barrack for some Albanian soldiers, when one of the men pointed out to me a mark in the window-seat which he said was the impression of David's elbow.†

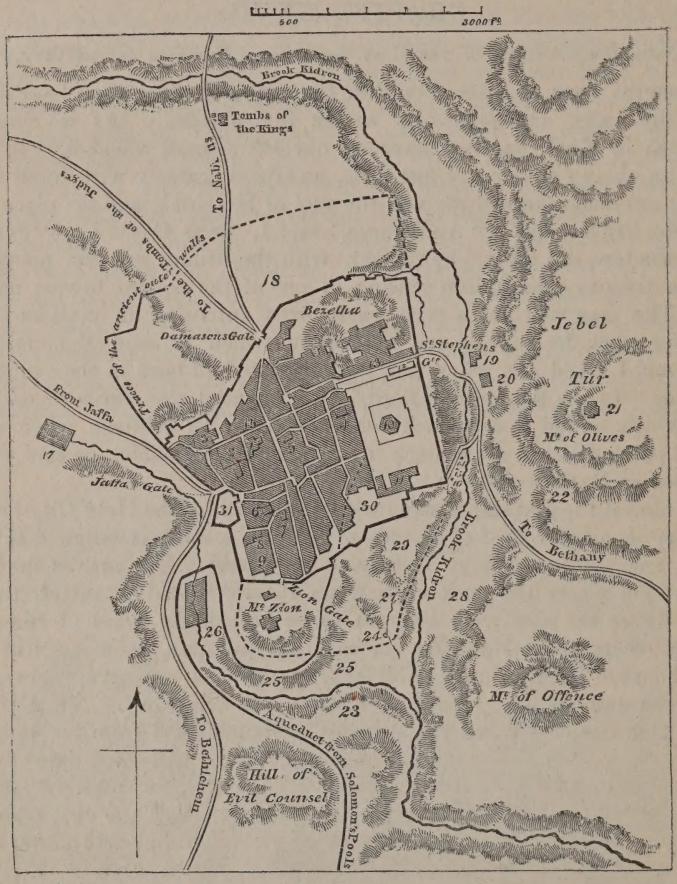
Thus almost the first step I made within the walls of the Holy City brought before me one of that host of legends by which a locality is assigned to every incident recorded in the bible history of Jerusalem. The monks show you the very spot where the cock crew when Peter denied his master, the five porches where the sick were brought to be healed, the house of Simon the Pharisee, where Mary Magdalen confessed her sins, nay, the mansion of Dives and the house of Lazarus in the parable! To judge from present appearance, the beggar was quite as well lodged as his opulent neighbour. Then there is the Via Dolorosa, the way by which the Saviour passed from the judgment hall of Pilate to Calvary, wherein are to be seen the spot where the people laid hold of Simon the Cyrene, and compelled him to bear the cross, and the three different stones on which Christ, fainting, sat down to rest, with the dent made by the cross in the wall of a house against which he fell. But all the other legendary localities of Jerusalem are eclipsed by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, of which we shall speak presently in detail. The



Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

* Monro. † Captain Light.

PLAN OF JERUSALEM.



REFERENCES.

- - - - - Circuit of the ancient outer walls of Jerusalem, according to Dr. Robinson.
1. Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
2. Greek Convent.
3. Latin ditto.
4. College of Dervishes.
5. Hospital of Helena.
6. English Church.
7. Syrian Convent.
8. Church of St. James.
9. Armenian Convent.
10. Mosque of Omar.
11. Mosque of Aksar.
12. Pool of Bethesda.
13. 13. Via Dolorosa.
14. Tomb of Absalom } Valley of Jehoshaphat.
15. Ditto St. James }
16. Tomb of Zacharias, Valley of Jehoshaphat.
17. Upper Gihon Pool.
18. Grotto of Jeremiah.
19. Tomb of the Virgin Mary.
20. Garden of Gethsemane.
21. Church of the Ascension.
22. Tombs of the Prophets.
23. Aceldama.
24. Pool of Siloam.
25. Valley of the Sons of Hinnom.
26. Lower Gihon Pool.
27. Subterranean Water-course.
28. Village of Siloam.
29. Fountain of the Virgin, or King's Pool.
30. Remains of an ancient bridge.
31. Citadel.

Bible is the only safe guide-book in this land of ignorance and superstition. "Yet while I question the truth, I would not impugn the poetry of some of these traditions, or deny that they add a peculiar and most thrilling interest to the scenes to which they are attached—*loca sancta*, indeed, when we think of them as shrines hallowed by the pilgrimages and the prayers of ages." *

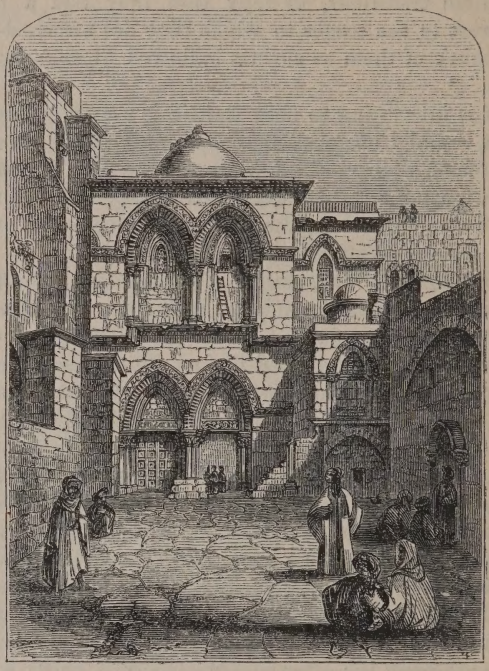
It is interesting to note that it is still a common custom throughout the East,—and I observed it this morning in the streets of Jerusalem,—to lay a cripple or a leper, like Lazarus, at the door of some wealthy man, or to place him in a public thoroughfare stretched upon his mat or wooden litter. The blind too line the approaches to the city, and cry out with a loud voice to the passers-by for mercy and for charity.

On entering the gates of Jerusalem, apart from the overpowering recollections which naturally rush upon the mind, I was in many respects agreeably disappointed. From the descriptions of Chateaubriand and other travellers, I had expected to find the houses of the city miserable, the streets filthy, and the population squalid. Yet the first impression made on my mind was of a different character; nor did I afterwards see any reason to doubt the correctness of this first impression. The houses are in general better built, and the streets cleaner, than those of Alexandria, Smyrna, or even Constantinople. Indeed of all the Oriental cities it was my lot to visit, Jerusalem after Cairo is the cleanest and most solidly built. The streets, it is true, are narrow and very rudely paved, like those of all cities in the East. The houses are of hewn stone, often large, and furnished with small domes on the roofs, which seem to be not merely for ornament, but to be intended on account of the scarcity of timber to aid in supporting and strengthening the otherwise flat roofs. There is usually one or more over each room in a house; and they serve also to give a greater elevation, and an architectural effect to the ceiling of the room which rises within them. The house-tops are the constant retreats of the people, and many of them are covered with awnings. Portions of the parapet walls are curiously constructed of small cylinders of red crockery-ware, piled up in a pyramidal form, and forming a kind of open work that allows the air to blow through, and produces a most refreshing current. The inhabitants say that this construction has also the effect of preserving the wall from being blown down by the many sudden squalls and tempests common to this country at particular seasons. Besides this it is useful in permitting the ladies to observe unseen what is going forward in the neighbourhood. †

Ancient Jerusalem was built upon several hills, the names of which must be familiar to every reader: they are easily distinguishable though the natural surface has undergone great changes. We learn from Josephus that some of these elevations were cut down, and the valleys between them filled up by the Asmonean kings; whilst the decay of ancient buildings and the accumulation of rubbish through so many ages have probably done yet more to encumber and conceal the original features of this site. The present town is full of inequalities; you are ever ascending or descending; there are no level streets; and houses are built upon mountains of rubbish, which are probably twenty, thirty, or fifty feet above the original soil. ‡

* Lord Lindsay. † Dr. Robinson. Wilde. ‡ Dr. Olin.

The first and most interesting object within the walls of the holy city, the spot to which every pilgrim first directs his steps, is the Holy Sepulchre. The approach to it from every direction lies through narrow filthy lanes, and small bazaars generally filled with ragged Arab women, the vendors of vegetables and snails, the latter of which are much eaten here, especially during Lent. After many crooked turnings we arrive in the large square court in front of the church. Here the scene exhibited, in the height of the pilgrim season, is of the most motley and extraordinary appearance. On the upper raised steps are tables spread with coffee, sherbet, sweetmeats and refreshments; throughout the court are seated pedlars and the Bethlehemite vendors of holy merchandise, such as crosses, beads, rosaries and amulets, and mother-o'-pearl shells, which are brought generally from the Red Sea, and engraved with religious subjects chiselled in relief; models of the Holy Sepulchre in wood inlaid with mother-o'-pearl, and drinking-cups from the deposits of the Jordan, with verses from the Bible engraved on them; they are nearly as black as ebony and take a fine polish. Through these wares hundreds of persons pass and repass; pilgrims of many nations in their different costumes; Latin, Armenian, Russian, Greek, and Coptish friars, with Turkish, Arnaout and Arab soldiers—all forming the most extraordinary scene that could be found in any spot upon the globe; and a polyglot language is heard such as few other places in the world could exhibit. The Mussulmans as well as the Christians make pilgrimages to el-Khoddes,* "the Holy City," especially at Easter, when they have a religious festival that lasts a week.



Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The key of the church is kept by the governor of the city; the door is guarded by a Turk, and opened only at fixed hours, and then only with the consent of the three convents, and in the presence of the several dragomen; an arrangement which often causes great and vexatious delays to such as desire

* The modern, and probably also the most ancient name of Jerusalem among the Arabs. Herodotus calls it Kadytos.

admittance. This formality was probably intended for solemnity and effect, but its consequence is exactly the reverse; for as soon as the door is opened, the pilgrims, who have almost all been kept waiting for some time, and have naturally become impatient, rush in, struggling with each other, overturning the dragomen, and thumped by the Turkish door-keeper, and are driven like a herd of wild animals into the body of the church. There is no attempt here to exaggerate a picture the lightest shades of which are already too dark. The facts we relate are proved by the concurrent testimony of many eye-witnesses, English, American, French, and German; and Catholic travellers have been no less vehement than Protestant in denouncing the scandalous indecencies practised round the supposed tomb of the Redeemer. The turbulence of the scene may not be equally great in all years, for the number of pilgrims fluctuates annually from three thousand to perhaps twenty thousand; but when they muster in full strength, we may well believe that the traveller will have reason, like Mr. Stephens, "frequently to consider it putting life and limb in peril to mingle in that crowd."

Supposing then the rush over, and the traveller to have recovered from its effects, he will find himself in a large apartment, forming a sort of vestibule; on the left, in a recess in the wall, is a large divan, cushioned and carpetted, where the Turkish door-keeper is usually sitting with half-a-dozen of his friends, smoking the long pipe and drinking coffee, and always conducting himself with great dignity and propriety. Directly in front, within the body of the church, having at each end three enormous wax candles more than twenty feet high, and a number of silver lamps suspended above it of different sizes and fashions, gifts from the Catholic, Greek, and Armenian convents, is a long flat stone called, the "stone of unction," and on this it is said the body of our Lord was laid when taken down from the cross, and washed and anointed in preparation for sepulture. This is the first object that arrests the pilgrims on their entrance; and here they prostrate themselves in succession, the old and the young, women and children, the rich man and the beggar, and all kiss the sacred stone. It is a slab of polished white marble, and only does duty as a substitute for the genuine stone which is said to be beneath it: but this consideration in no degree affects the multitude or the fervour of the kisses it receives. As you advance towards the stone you have Mount Calvary immediately on your right hand.

Beyond the stone of unction the traveller finds himself in the body of the church, a space of about 300 feet in length, and 160 in breadth. In front his progress is arrested by the southern exterior of the Greek Chapel, which occupies more than half the great area: on his left, at the western end, is a circular space, about 100 feet in diameter, surrounded by clumsy square columns, which support a gallery above, and a dome 150 feet high, of imposing appearance and effect. This is the Latin Chapel, in the centre of which, immediately below the aperture that admits light through the dome, rises a small oblong building of marble, twenty feet long, twelve broad, and about fifteen feet in height, surmounted by a small cupola, standing on columns. This little building is circular at the back, but square and finished with a platform in front. Within it is what passes for the Holy Sepulchre.

Leaving for a moment the throng that is constantly pressing at the door

of the sepulchre, let us make the tour of the church, beginning from the south-west, and proceeding by the north to the east, and so round to our starting point. The church, be it observed, faces the four cardinal points.

The first object we have to notice is an iron circular railing, in the shape of a large parrot's cage, having within it a lamp, and marking the spot where Mary watched the crucifixion "afar off." In the arcades round the Latin dome are small chapels for the Syrians, Maronites, and other sects of Christians, who have not, like the Catholics, Greeks, and Armenians, large chapels in the body of the church. The poor Copts have nothing but a nook, about six feet square, in the western end of the sepulchre, which is tawdrily adorned in the manner of the Greeks. The Syrians have a small and very shabby recess, containing nothing but a plain altar: in the side there is a small door opening to a dark gallery, which leads, as the monks say, to the tombs of Joseph and Nicodemus, between which, and that of the Saviour, there is a subterranean communication. The tombs are excavated in the rock which here forms the floor of the chamber. "Without any expectation of making a discovery," says Stephens, "I remember that once in prying about this part of the building alone, I took the little taper that lighted the chamber, and stepped down into the tomb; and I had just time to see that one of the excavations never could have been intended for a tomb, being not more than three feet long, when I heard the footsteps of pilgrim-visitors, and scrambled out with such haste, that I let the taper fall, put out the light, and had to grope my way back in the dark."

Further on, and nearly in range of the front of the sepulchre, is a large opening, forming a sort of court to the entrance of the Latin Chapel. On one side is a gallery containing a fine organ; and the chapel itself is neat enough, and differs but little from those in the churches of Italy.

The organ of the Latins is a sore annoyance to their neighbours the Greeks, from whose religious service all instrumental music is excluded; but they make up for that defect by the most discordant nasal singing imaginable, each vying with his neighbour, and braying with a forty-nose power that would be really deafening by itself, were it not overcome by the noise that is produced by the beating of copper drums about the size of boilers, belonging to the Armenians. There are so few Copts in the place, that the sounds they make amount to little more than occasional whines. The chapel in which the organ stands is called the Chapel of the Apparition, where Christ appeared to the Virgin. Within the door on the right, in an enclosure completely hidden from view, is the pillar of flagellation, to which our Saviour was tied when he was scourged, before being taken into the presence of Pontius Pilate. As in this instance the holy object cannot be reached by the lips of the faithful, it is deemed equally efficacious to kiss it through another medium. A monk stands near the rail, and touching the pillar with a long stick that has a piece of leather at the point of it, like a billiard cue, stretches it towards the lips that are ready pouting to receive it. Only half the pillar is here; the other half is in one of the churches in Rome, where may also be seen the table on which our Saviour ate his last supper with his disciples, and the stone on which the cock crowed when Peter denied his master.

Leaving the Chapel of the Apparition, and turning to the left with our faces due east, we have on the right hand the outside of the Greek Chapel, which occupies the largest space in the body of the church, and on the left is a range of chapels and doors, the first of which leads to the prison where they say our Saviour was confined before he was led to the crucifixion. In front of the door is an unintelligible machine, described as the stone on which He was placed when put in the stocks. The reader in all probability never heard before of this incident in the history of man's redemption; but the Christians in Jerusalem have a great deal more of such knowledge than they gain from the Bible.

In the semicircle at the eastern part of the church, there are three chapels; one of these contains the stone on which our Lord rested previously to ascending Mount Calvary; another is the place where the soldiers parted his raiment amongst them; and the third marks the spot where Longinus, the soldier who pierced his side, passed the remainder of his days in penance. Beneath one of the altars lies a stone having a hole through it, and placed in a short trough, so that it seems impossible for any thing but a spectre to pass through the hole. Nevertheless the achievement was a customary penance among the Greeks, and called by them "purgatory;" until a lady, *enceinte*, in labouring to drag herself through it, came to some mischief; and ever since that accident the Turks have in mercy guarded the stone by an iron grating.

In this part also is the entrance to one of the most holy places in the church, the Chapel of the Cross. Descending twenty-eight broad marble steps the visitor comes to a large chamber eighteen paces square, dimly lighted by a few distant lamps; the roof is supported by four short columns with enormous capitals. In front of the steps is the altar, and on the right a seat on which the Empress Helena, advised by a dream where the true cross was to be found, sat and watched the workmen who were digging below. Descending again fourteen steps another chamber is reached, darker and more dimly lighted than the first, and hung with faded red tapestry; a marble slab, having on it a figure of the cross, covers the mouth of the pit in which the true cross was found.

On reascending into the body of the church, and approaching the vestibule through which we first entered, we find Mount Calvary on our left. This we ascend by a narrow marble staircase of eighteen steps, formed of a single stone, a fact to which the pilgrim's attention is solicited by the monks as a proof that the chapel at the top is really founded on the natural rock. But this fact would prove nothing; for there is a staircase in the Ruspoli Palazzo at Rome of one hundred and twenty steps, cut from a single block of white marble. Every visible part of the chapel is a manifest *fabric*. To this objection it is answered that "the stone-work cases the rock," which may or may not be true; but wherever examination might be allowed it seems to be purposely withheld.

The chapel is about fifteen feet square, paved with marble in mosaic, and hung on all sides with silken tapestry and lamps dimly burning; it is divided by two short pillars hung also with silk, and supporting quadrangular arches. At the extremity is a large altar, ornamented with paintings and figures;

and under the altar a circular silver plate with a hole in the centre, indicating the spot in which rested the step of the cross. In this place, as an English traveller relates, his feelings were jarred by one of those untoward incidents that sometimes occur, to the discomfiture of all enthusiasm. As he was bending with deep emotion over the spot which the Roman Church adores, a Greek from behind whispered in his ear, "That's not the place; some feet farther, signore." On each side of the principal hole is another, the two designating the places where the crosses of the two thieves were erected; and near by, on the same marble platform, is a crevice about three feet long and three inches wide, having brass bars over it and a covering of silk. Removing the covering and aided by a lamp one sees beneath a fissure in the rock; and this, say the monks, is the rock that was rent asunder, and "through this rent," they add, "the soul of the bad thief went to hell."

Behind the altar and separated from it by a thin wall is a chapel, in the centre of which is a stone marking the exact spot where Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac; and the monks state that when the cross was laid down, before it was raised, our Lord's head rested upon this point; they seem to consider the establishment of this fact necessary to the complete fulfilment of the type. It may seem idle to repeat such vain and senseless opinions; at the same time the narration of them is not without its use, as tending to justify the doubts that arise upon all the traditionary information so unsparingly bestowed.

Descending to the floor of the church, we are shown another rent in the rock, said to be a continuation of the one above; but so guarded by an iron grating, that examination is out of the question, as it can only be examined by thrusting a taper through the bars. Directly opposite the fissure is a large monument over the head of—Adam.

The little chapel on the spot where Mary stood when St. John received our Lord's dying injunction to protect her as his mother, is an appendage to Mount Calvary.

The reader will probably think that all these things are enough, and more than enough, to be comprised under one roof. And now, having finished the tour of the church, let us return to the great object of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem—the Holy Sepulchre. Taking off the shoes on the marble platform in front the visitor is admitted by a low door, on entering which the proudest head must needs do reverence. In the centre of the first chamber is the stone which was rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre—a square block of marble cut and polished; and, though the Armenians have lately succeeded in establishing the genuineness of the stone in their chapel on Mount Zion (the admission by the other monks, however, being always accompanied by the assertion that they stole it), yet the infatuated Greek still kisses and adores the block of marble as the very stone on which the angel sat when he announced to the women, "He is not dead; he is risen; come and see the place where the Lord lay." Again bending the head, and lower than before, the visitor enters the inner chamber, the holiest of holy places. The sepulchre "hewn out of the rock" is a marble sarcophagus, somewhat resembling a common bathing tub, with a lid of the same material. Over it

hang forty-three lamps, which burn without ceasing night and day. The sarcophagus is six feet one inch long, and occupies about one-half the chamber; and one of the monks being always present to receive the gifts or tribute of the pilgrims, there is only room for three or four at a time to enter. The walls are of a greenish marble, usually called verdantique, and this is all. And it will be borne in mind that all this is in a building above ground, standing on the floor of the church.

"Many of both sexes," says Major Skinner, "entered while I stood by the tomb, and prayed with the greatest fervour. Some kissed the stone and dropped their tears upon it; while others rubbed their faces and hands on the hallowed place over and over again, as if they expected to retain for ever a portion of its sanctity. Where could there be a more impressive, a more solemn scene? Yet the monks carry their nonsense to the grave itself where they believe our Saviour lay. The Greek priest had a large collection of tapers ready to light on receiving a coin from the pilgrims. These were stuck in a row above the tomb, which forms an altar, and melted away upon it, while the money paid for this duty rang upon the sacred sepulchre. 'And this,' thought I, 'in honour of Him who cast out all them that bought and sold in the Temple.' No place is so likely to make a rational Christian mourn as Jerusalem." The Greek monk who keeps watch in the sepulchre extinguishes the pilgrims' candles when they are half burnt out; the remains are the perquisite of the Greek Church; and that community, it was confidently asserted in Turner's time (1815), gained ten purses a year by its traffic in candles' ends thus carried on within the tomb*.

The first tendency of every generous mind, on visiting Jerusalem, is, we are sure, rather to acquiesce if possible in the truth of the tradition that fixes the site of the Holy Sepulchre, than to cavil at a belief so dear to the Christian heart. The feelings of a man are to be envied, who can, indeed, regard the small chapel in the great church as the "Mansion of Victory, where Christ triumphed over the grave, and disarmed death of all its terrors." It is scarcely possible to conceive a higher or holier enthusiasm; and it would be far more agreeable to sustain than to dissolve such illusions. But a reaction always takes place on beholding the vile indecencies practised by superstitious votaries on the very threshold of the grave which they suppose to have been hallowed by the remains of their Redeemer. The thought will then assuredly arise, that if this be really the sepulchre of Christ, it would have been far better for the interests of Christianity that it had for ever remained locked up in the hands of the Turks, and all access to it been denied to Christian feet.

It has been shown by Dr. Robinson (incomparably the most trust-worthy of all modern writers on the Holy Land) that it is scarcely possible that the modern Calvary should have lain without the limits of the ancient walls, as the Gospels expressly assert the true Calvary to have done. We do not here allude to the third or outer walls (marked on the plan), which were not erected until ten or twelve years after the death of Christ, but to the second or interior wall, which began at the gate of Gennath, near the tower

* Stephens. Skinner. Monro. Turner. Poujoulat.

of Hippicus, in the castle of David (3 in the plan), and ran to the fortress Antonia on the N. of the temple, (that is to a point a little to the right of 4 and N. of 10.) Of the date of its erection we are nowhere informed; but it must probably have been older than the time of Hezekiah, who built within the city a pool apparently the same which now exists under his name (opposite 31 and adjoining 2.)

On viewing the city from the remains of the ancient Hippicus, as well as from the site of Antonia, we* were satisfied that if the second wall might be supposed to have run in a straight line between those points, it would have left the church of the Holy Sepulchre without the city; and thus far have settled the topographical part of the question. But it was not less easy to perceive that in thus running in a straight course the wall must also have left the Pool of Hezekiah on the outside; or if it made a curve sufficient to include this pool, it would naturally also have included the site of the Sepulchre, unless it made an angle expressly in order to exclude the latter spot. Besides this, Josephus distinctly testifies that the second wall ran in a circle or curve obviously towards the north: and here let us mention a fact which we noticed near the Damascus gate, and which apparently has not been mentioned by any writer.

Every traveller has probably observed the large ancient hewn stones which lie just in the inside of that gate towards the east. In looking at these one day and passing round them we were surprised to find there a square dark room adjacent to the wall; the sides of which were entirely composed of stones having precisely the character of those still seen at the corners of the Temple area,—large, bevilled, with the whole surface hewn smooth, and thus exhibiting an earlier and more careful style of architecture than those remaining on the tower of Hippicus. Connected with the room on the west side is a winding staircase, leading to the top of the wall, the sides of which are of the same character. Following out this discovery, we found on the western side of the gate, though further from it, another room of precisely the same kind, corresponding in all respects to that upon the eastern side, except that it had been much more injured in building the present wall, and is in part broken away. Some of the stones are much disintegrated and decayed; but they all seem to be lying in their original places as if they had never been disturbed or removed from the spot where they were first fitted to each other. The only satisfactory conjecture which I can form respecting these structures is that they were ancient towers of a date anterior to the time of Herod, and probably the guard-houses of an ancient gate upon the spot. This gate could have belonged only to the second wall. Another conjecture is indeed possible, viz., that when Adrian rebuilt the city, the Romans may have taken stones from the ruins of the Temple and built the towers. But this seems inconsistent with the style of architecture, the evident fitting of the stones to each other, and also with their decay apparently in their original places. Nor is such a conjecture supported by anything analogous in other parts of the city.

Again, had this wall, built for the defence of the city, run a straight course, it would have then passed obliquely over the very foot of the hill

* Dr. Robinson.

Akra, and have been overlooked and commanded on the west by every other part of the same hill. In this case too the whole space included in the lower city would have been reduced to a small triangle of about 600 yards on the south side, and some 400 yards on the east side, a space not equal to that of many squares in London. Yet we know that this lower city, at the time of the crucifixion, was extensive and populous; three gates led from it to the Temple; and ten years later Agrippa erected the third wall far beyond the limits of the present city, in order to shelter the extensive suburbs, which before were unprotected. These suburbs could not well have arisen within the short interval of ten years, but must have already existed before the time of our Lord's crucifixion.

After examining all these circumstances repeatedly upon the spot, and as, I hope, without prejudice, the minds of both my companion and myself were forced to the conviction that the hypothesis which makes the second wall to run so as to exclude the alleged site of the Holy Sepulchre is, on topographical grounds, untenable and impossible. If there was a prejudice upon my own mind, it was certainly in favour of an opposite result; for I went to Jerusalem strongly prepossessed with the idea that the alleged site might have lain without the second wall.

But even if such a view could be admitted, the existence of populous suburbs on this part is strongly at variance with the probability that here should have been a place of execution, with a garden and a sepulchre. The tombs of the ancients were not usually within their cities, nor among their habitations; and, excepting those of the kings on Zion, there is no evidence that sepulchres existed in Jerusalem.

The most plausible argument in favour of the genuineness of the so-called holy sepulchre, is founded on the presumption that the site must have been known and regarded with peculiar reverence by the first Christian church in Jerusalem; this being granted, there is the highest probability that its memory should have been preserved down to the age of Adrian, who set up a statue of Venus upon Calvary, and one of Jupiter over the holy sepulchre; by this imprudent profanation, it is argued, idolatry over-reached itself, and did, in fact, only perpetuate the identity of the sacred places, until Constantine surrounded them with those tokens of authenticity which have remained about them to the present day.

Now, this is indeed a strong case at first view; but its strength is merely specious. Though it be freely conceded that the early Christians must have had a knowledge of the places where the Lord was crucified and buried, there is not a shadow of evidence either in the New Testament or in the history of the primitive church that they regarded those places with any veneration. The writers do not even make, on behalf of their Lord and Master, the natural appeal which Peter employs in the case of David, "that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." The great apostle of the Gentiles, whose constant theme is the death and resurrection of Christ, and the glory of his cross, has not, in all his writings, the slightest allusion to any reverence for the *place* of these great events, or the instrument of the Saviour's passion. On the contrary, the whole tenor of our Lord's teaching, and that of Paul, and indeed of every part of the New

Testament, was directed to draw off the minds of men from an attachment to peculiar times and places, and to lead the true worshippers to worship God not merely at Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim, but everywhere "in spirit and in truth."

The erection of an idol over the sepulchre* by Adrian about A.D. 135 would certainly have great weight in a decision of the question, could this be regarded as a well-ascertained fact. But what is the amount of testimony bearing on the point? It is simply what writers *ex post facto* have mentioned such an idol as standing, not over the sepulchre known of old as that of Christ, but *over the spot fixed upon by Constantine as that sepulchre.* Their testimony proves conclusively that an idol stood upon that spot; but it has no bearing to show that this spot was the true sepulchre. Eusebius, the contemporary and eye-witness, makes no mention of any tradition connected with the idol. Jerome, sixty years later, is the only one to ascribe it to Adrian; and Sozomen in the middle of the fifth century is the first to remark that the heathen erected it in the hope that Christians who came to pay their devotions at the sepulchre would thus have the appearance of worshipping an idol. Yet from these slender materials the skilful pen of Chateaubriand has wrought out a statement so definite and specious, and one which has been so often reproduced after him in different forms by other writers, that most readers who have not had an opportunity of investigation have probably regarded the matter as a well-established fact.

Thus the positive proofs alleged in favour of an earlier tradition respecting the Holy Sepulchre vanish away; and even the probabilities urged on the case are opposed by many cogent circumstances; such, for instance, as the utter silence of Eusebius and of all following writers as to the existence of any such tradition. Nor is this all, for the language, both of Eusebius and Constantine himself, seems strongly to imply, that no such former tradition could have been extant, and goes to show that the discovery of the Holy Sepulchre was held to be the result, not of a previous knowledge derived from tradition, but of a supernatural interposition and revelation.

But even were it possible to prove the existence of such a prevailing tradition as that in question, it would still remain to be asked, must that tradition necessarily have been deserving of implicit credence? Let us compare it with another tradition of precisely the same character and import. The place of our Lord's ascension must have been, to the first Christians in Jerusalem, an object of no less interest than his sepulchre, and could not but have been equally known to them. The knowledge of it, too, would have been handed down from century to century through the same succession of bishops and holy men. In this case, moreover, we know that such a tradition did actually exist before the age of Constantine, which pointed out the place of the ascension on the summit of the Mount of Olives. Yet, notwithstanding this weight of testimony and the apparent length of time and unbroken succession through which the story had been handed down, the tradition itself is unquestionably false, since it is contradicted by the express declaration of Scripture. According to St. Luke, Jesus led out his disciples as far as Bethany, and blessed them; and

* Jerome is the first to speak of the Temple of Jupiter; he wrote about A.D. 395.

while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. Yet Helena erected a church upon the Mount of Olives; and assuredly there could have been no tradition better accredited in respect to the Holy Sepulchre. Indeed the fact that no pilgrimages were made to the latter goes strongly to show that there was no tradition respecting it whatever.

Thus in whatever way we view the question we are led irresistibly to the conclusion that the Golgotha and the tomb now shown in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are not upon the real places of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. If it be asked, Where then are the true sites to be sought? the reply must be that probably all search can only be in vain. We know nothing more from the Scriptures than that they were near each other, without the gate and nigh to the city in a frequented spot. This would favour the conclusion that the place was probably upon a great road leading from one of the gates; and such a spot would only be found upon the western or northern sides of the city, on the roads leading towards Joppa or Damascus.*

Good Friday. On this night the monks of the Latin Convent performed the ceremony of the crucifixion. The doors were open at an early hour for a short time, and then closed for the night, so that we were obliged to be there two or three hours before the ceremony began. Most of the pilgrims had prepared against the tediousness of waiting by bringing with them their beds, mats, and coverlets; and all around the floor of the church, men, women, and children were taking an intermediate nap. The proceedings commenced in the chapel of the Latin Convent, where priests, monks, and prior with his gold mitre and black velvet cloak trimmed with gold, and some other dignitaries of the church, were present, all very richly dressed.

On a large cross was a jointed figure representing the Saviour, the crown of thorns on his head, nails in his hands and feet, blood trickling from them, and a gaping wound in his side. Before setting out on the procession, the lights were extinguished; and in total darkness a monk commenced a sermon in Italian. After it the candles were relighted, banners and crucifixes raised, the procession moved round the church towards Calvary. Stopping at the pillar of Flagellation, at the prison where they say Christ was confined, where the crown of thorns were put upon his head, where his raiment was divided, &c., and giving a chant and an address by one or the monks at each place, they wound round the church till they came back to the staircase leading to Calvary, and leaving their shoes below, mounted barefoot to the place of crucifixion. Here they first went to an altar on the right, where, as they have it, Christ was nailed to the cross; and laying the figure down on the floor, although they had been bearing it aloft for more than two hours, they now went through the ceremony of nailing it;

* The whole of the foregoing argument is abridged from Dr. Robinson, whose reasonings appear to us quite conclusive. Those who may wish to know what can be urged on the other side should consult the works of Mr. Wilde and Dr. Olin. The question at issue is not one lying exclusively between Catholics on the one side and Protestants on the other: the voices of powerful assailants and defenders are heard from among the members of both communions.

and returning to the adjoining altar, passed the foot of the cross through the marble floor, and with the bleeding figure upon it, set it up in the hole in the natural rock, according to the tradition, on the very spot where 1800 years ago Christ was crucified. At the foot of the cross a monk preached a sermon in Italian, warm, earnest, and impassioned; frequently turning round, and, with both hands extended, apostrophizing the bleeding figure above him. In spite of my scepticism and incredulity, and my contempt for monkish tricks, I could not behold this scene unmoved. Every attendant upon the crucifixion was represented; for the governor of Jerusalem was present, with a smile of scorn upon his handsome features, and Turkish and Mussulman soldiers breaking the stillness of the scene with loud laughs of derision; and I could almost imagine that I heard the unbelieving Jews with gibes and sneers crying out, "If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross!"

After the body had remained for some time suspended, two friars, personating Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, approached the foot of the cross; and one of them on the right, with a long pair of pincers, took the crown of thorns from the head, waved it around slowly with a theatrically mournful air, kissed it, and laid it down on a table before him; he then drew the long spikes from the hands and feet, and moving them around one by one slowly as before, kissed them and laid them also on the table. I never saw any thing more affecting than this representation, bad as it was, of the bloody drama of the crucifixion; and as the monks drew out the long nails from the hands and feet, even the scoffing Mussulmans stopped their laugh of derision. I stood by the table while they laid the body upon it, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth; followed them when they carried it down from Calvary to the stone of unction; and stood by the head of the stone while they washed and anointed it and prepared it for burial. As soon as the image was deposited on the slab numbers of pilgrims came and prostrated themselves before it in the lowliest posture of Oriental abasement, rubbing their foreheads in the dust of the pavement, and imprinting kisses on the image and the marble on which it lay, with crossings, prayers, and tears, evincing every mark of sincerity. A Franciscan then came forward to address the surrounding multitude in Arabic.

At this period of the service the pictorial effect was magnificent and sublime. The scene was such as Rembrandt would have excelled in, and such as Rembrandt alone could have painted. The lights and shadows cast by the numerous torches were equal to the finest effect of his imagination. In the centre stood the prominent figure of the group, the preacher,—a tall, handsome, but austere-looking Spaniard, whose eyes of the darkest hue flashed fire as he warmed in his subject. His Franciscan garb, bound not indeed with a leather girdle about his loins, but with the knotted cord of his order—the Oriental tongue in which he spoke—his vehement, impassioned, but not ungraceful action—all combined to bring the Baptist vividly before the fancy. His audience too were strictly in keeping, and in costume and appearance admirably represented those who flocked to hear the voice of him that cried in the wilderness. The turbaned heads, the bearded faces, the flowing robes—the wealthy Maronite and Armenian

in garments of fine cloth and rich silks, standing beside the wild Arab in his simple shirt of blue cotton, and the fierce-looking Bethlehemite in his woollen burnoos, alternately striped white and brown—the Greek caloyer, with his raven locks flowing over his shoulders from beneath the quadrangular black cap, and a noble black beard; and his lay countryman in his close red skull-cap, ornamented with a blue tassel, surmounting the same profusion of hair, richly-embroidered vest and jacket, white petticoat and scarlet greaves, still the καρηκομόωντες καὶ εὐκνημῖδες Αχαιοὶ, "the full-haired and well-greaved Greeks," with various others, formed a group at once diversified and harmonious, with which our angular and scanty European habiliments did not assimilate.

When the Arabic discourse was brought to a close, the monks bore away the body to the sepulchre, where it was deposited till Easter-day, when the ceremony of the Resurrection is to be performed. It was now near two o'clock; the proceedings of the day were ended, the Mussulman soldiers had retired, and I returned to the convent.*

The Holy Fire.—The anniversary Saturday that follows the guilt of the Crucifixion, and precedes the hope of the Resurrection, is observed as a most solemn fast in the Greek church. Entering the great church at nine o'clock A. M., I found some of the congregation singing, dancing, and shouting round the stone of unction, while others on their bare knees bowed their bare heads to the stone. The crowd round the sepulchre itself was dense and disorderly; nevertheless through the centre of them a passage was kept always open for the processions of fanatics, who were continually dancing and rushing round the sepulchre in bodies, and raising at the same time most hideous cries, among which even the wild Nubian yell might be distinguished. In each procession some of the foremost of the party bore others standing erect on their shoulders, and as these latter were thrown over by the jostling and the rapidity of the motion, others quickly succeeded to their places, and he who could stand the longest seemed to be accounted the best mountebank. The revelry of an English fair is a scene of tranquillity and decorum compared with the deeds of these benighted Christians. In the darker recesses of the church every sense was offended, and the filthiness which made it impossible to walk, alike forbids one to describe.

As I passed round the sepulchre, along the alley that was left vacant for the fanatical processions, a crowd of these frenzied enthusiasts were coming on behind us, one bearing another on his shoulders, and chancing to push against my Catholic conductor, the latter instantly felled two of them to the ground with his fist. I returned to my den in the convent to await the hour when the holy fire was to play its part, of which the following is a short biographical notice.

When the church of the Holy Sepulchre was exclusively in the hands of the Roman Catholics, it was their custom on the anniversary of the Crucifixion to extinguish the lamps throughout the church; and on the Saturday, the eve of the Resurrection and the day of preparation, the bishop, entering the church with a solemn procession, replaced new fire in the lamps. Now, it chanced upon a day in the primitive ages of piety and fervour, that the

* Stephens. Three Weeks in Palestine.

procession came down from Mount Calvary and entered the Holy Sepulchre, some of the lamps were found already burning—kindled by miraculous fire; and the miracle was vouchsafed every year after this to the Roman Catholics, and was fully displayed in the time of Godfrey of Boulogne. At a subsequent period, when that church had lost the ascendancy and the Greeks succeeded to it, the latter conceiving their faith to be as much entitled to supernatural sanction as that of the Romans, and having received certain information that the miracle would not take offence and throw them over, but would still keep its engagement though they should put it off to a week later, did so; and the miracle still waits upon the Greeks as it used to do upon the Romans, but at two o'clock on the following Saturday. Gibbon says (chap. lvii.) "This pious fraud was first devised in the ninth century."

Soon after twelve I returned to the church. The crowd had considerably increased, but preceded by a scourge-bearer the way was cleared, and I reached the door leading to the gallery above. It was some time before the guardians would admit me, but being persuaded that the applicant was really *un' Signore Inglese*, the door was at length opened. On the inside four monks were posted for its defence, but the number of candidates for admission was numerous. One of these rushing in, the foremost monk met him in the face with a cudgel, and he staggered out again; another made a similar attempt, and was stopped by the same process.

It should be remarked that on the north and south sides of the little chapel which covers the sepulchre, in either wall is a hole of an oval form, through which the fire issues for the two rival parties, the Greeks and Armenians. The Copts, Syrians, and Abyssinians are obliged to obtain it as they can in the general scramble, or buy it of the former at a high price, as they have no private holes of their own.

As the crisis approached, the skirmishes between Greeks and Armenians became severe. Towards two P.M. the Turkish governor entered, attended by his train and preceded by scourges, cour bashes, and staves, all busily employed. The conflict throughout the church now grew general, and sticks and fists were engaged between the contending zealots. The Mutesellim having given notice that *he was ready*, the Greek Patriarch, called "the Bishop of the Fire," was next introduced, heading a procession of order in their best clothes, who walked at a slow pace thrice round the sepulchre. At the end of the first round, as the mystic fire began to warm his intestines, his outer robe was removed: at the second round, his jacket and shirt were unbuttoned, and he appeared to be suffering under considerable increase of *coke:* at the third round, the jacket was taken off, and, with his cheeks swollen as if pregnant of fire, and groaning like Stromboli, he was locked into the chapel. What he did within I know not for certain, but I conjecture that he drew a phosphorus box from the pocket of his breeches (which had been advisedly left on him), and therewith lighted some tow and turpentine.

Without, expectation and expectants were on tiptoe, and every one was provided with a bunch of tapers, tied fast round the wrist. Close to the Armenian hole, three men were posted in light-blue dresses, from whom, to a side door, an avenue was kept clear through the mob. They were pro-

vided with ten lamps, and having received the fire before any of the other devotees, hurried out of the church, ducking down their heads to avoid the blows that were dealt at them, and surrounded by three or four others as protectors. The fire thus filched, immediately appeared among the women stationed above in the Armenian gallery and chapel, who lighted their tapers and crossed themselves with them in every direction. Some of them pressed the fire against their bared breasts, and when their tapers were thus extinguished, presently lighted them to repeat the same action. Others thrust them into caps and handkerchiefs, which they carried for that purpose, and lighting them again and again, continually extinguishing them in the same manner.

Below, the fury of the combatants was at its height, and the church presented one general and ferocious conflict. He who had obtained the fire of his party, and was not strong enough to secure his retreat, was severely beaten, and either his tapers were taken from him, or the fire put out; and, for this reason, some time elapsed before it was generally diffused throughout the church. It seems that the torches soonest lighted possess the greatest virtue, and on that account large sums are sometimes paid for the privilege of the first ignition. The torches are then extinguished, carried home by the pilgrims, and preserved for burning round their bodies after death.

At last the chapel and the Greek church beyond presented one blaze of light, and the uproar subsided. Turkish guards had been posted in different places as moderators, to protect the lives of the combatants; for on previous occasions this ceremony had been attended with distressing casualties. In former times, in order to increase the delusion practised upon the devotees, a dove was let loose from the cupola of the tomb, at the moment the sacred fire appeared, to represent the Holy Ghost! This latter part of the impious farce has been discontinued for some years past.

After the fire function, a little Spanish monk afforded much amusement by producing a phosphorus box, and showing up the trick to the Mutesellim, to whom the thing seemed quite new and unintelligible. The Spaniard was in consequence chaired and cheered through the gallery by the Franciscans, who bear no good feelings towards the Greeks.

Ten years ago a horrible catastrophe happened at the enactment of this ceremony. The air of the church had become so contaminated by the exhalations from the bodies of thousands crowded within it, that many persons fainted; terror, confusion, and a rush for the door, ensued; but as it turned inward it was impossible to get it opened, owing to the extreme pressure of the bewildered crowd against it. The governor of the city, who was present as a spectator in the Frank gallery, ran down and endeavoured to restore order; but he too was borne down by the pressure, and was with great difficulty saved, being at last carried out senseless over the heads of the people by a strong body of soldiers. By great exertion the guard forced back some of the crowd with the points of their weapons, and opened the doors: it has been ascertained that not fewer than 300 persons perished on that fearful night. Those concerned in the jugglery of this miraculous fire, endeavoured, by all possible means, to cloak the matter, and to prevent the exact number that were killed from being made public; but the impression made on the minds of the people was so great, that on the next day the very

same Armenian bishop, who had assisted at the ceremony, preached openly against its continuance, and strongly urged the people not to require the performance of what they had been taught to believe was miraculous. The Greeks, however, persuaded him afterwards to resume the farce which is found so profitable to the convents. The Latins at present hold the ceremony in great contempt; but, as we have already stated, it was originally their own invention. *

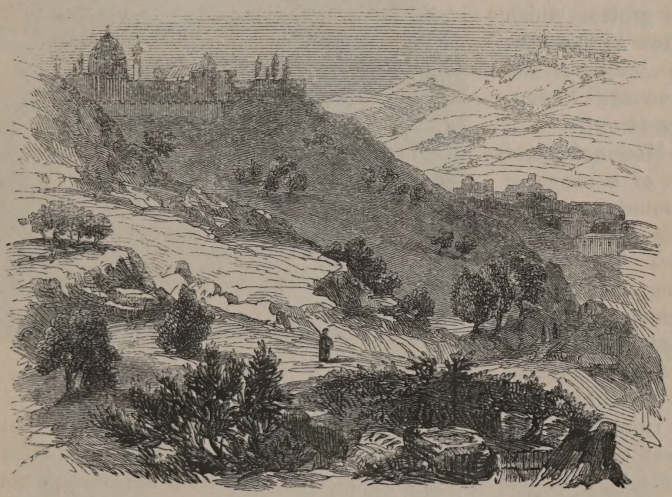
On Sunday morning, being Easter or Palm Sunday, I visited for the last time the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was more crowded than I had ever yet seen it. The court-yard literally swarmed with venders of amulets, crucifixes, and holy ornaments; and within the church were tables of oranges, figs, dates, &c. The Arab baker was walking about with a large tray on his head, crying his bread, and on each of the altars was a sort of shop, in which Greeks were making and selling chaplets and wreaths of palm leaves. It was altogether a lively image of the scene when Christ "went into the temple and cast out them that bought and sold, and overturned the tables of the money changers." The ceremonies of the day were in commemoration of that on which our Saviour entered into Jerusalem, riding upon an ass, when the multitude followed him, strewing their garments and branches of palm trees in his path, and crying "Hosannah to the Son of David!" When I entered, the monks of the Latin Convent were celebrating grand mass before the Holy Sepulchre; and in the mean time the Greeks were getting ready for their turn. Their chapel was crowded, and all along the corridors the monks were arranging the people in procession, and distributing banners, for which the young Greeks were scrambling; and in one place a monk with a standard in his hand, which had just been handed down from above, with his back against the wall, was knocking and kicking away a crowd of young Greeks, struggling to obtain it for the procession.

As soon as the Latins had finished, the Arab soldiers, whom I always found regular attendants at these scenes, as if they knew what was coming when the Greeks began, addressed them with loud shouts of "Yellah, yellah—come on, come on." A large banner was stationed at the door of the Sepulchre, and the rush of the pilgrims to prostrate themselves before it, and to touch it with their palm branches, was tremendous. A tall young Greek with a large turban on his head, while his left hand supported the banner, was laying about him with his right as if he were really defending the Sepulchre itself from the hands of the infidels. The procession advanced under a loud chant, preceded by a body of Turkish officers to clear the way; then came the priests wearing their richest dresses, their mitres and caps richly ornamented with precious stones, and carrying aloft sacred banners, and one of them sprinkling holy water. Wherever he came the rush was terrible; the Greeks became excited to a sort of frenzy in their eagerness to catch a drop; and one strapping fellow bursting through the rear ranks, thrust his face over my shoulder and bawled out "Papa, papa," in such an agonizing voice that the "papa" aimed at him a copious discharge, of which my face received the principal benefit. When the largest banner

* Monro. Wilde. Maundrell. Prokesch.

came round, the struggle to touch it with the palm-branches was inconceivable. A Turkish officer had until this time covered me with his body, and by dint of shouting, kicking, and striking furiously about him, saved me till the procession passed by; but after this the rush became dreadful. I could feel my ribs yielding under the pressure, and was really alarmed, when a sudden and mighty surge of the struggling mass hurried me into the stock in trade of a merchant of dates and oranges. Instead of picking up his goods, the fellow grappled at me; but I got out of his clutches as well as I could; and, setting up for myself, kicked, thumped, and scuffled until I made my way to the door; and that was my last visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Enough for the present of these scenes of fraud, folly, and shame; let us turn to purer objects of contemplation. Let us issue from St. Stephen's gate, and pausing for a moment among the tombs in the Turkish burial-ground, cross the bridge over the Brook Kedron, and the mysterious Valley of Jehoshaphat, and ascend the Mount of Olives. At the foot of the hill



Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives.

we come to a small enclosure, supposed, with great probability, to be the Garden of Gethsemane. There can be no doubt that if it be not the garden, it must at least be very near its site. It is a level space, about fifty paces square, surrounded by a low wall of loose stones. It contains eight olive trees whose age is incalculable, and which are fondly imagined to have been standing in the time of our Saviour. One of these, the largest, hacked and scarified by the knives of pilgrims, is reverenced as the identical tree under which Christ was betrayed; and its enormous roots growing high out of the earth, could induce a belief of almost any degree of antiquity. Mr. Wilde, a scientific observer, thinks there is nothing unreasonable in

imputing an existence of nineteen centuries to these trees; and it is nearly certain that they were in being at least eight hundred years ago; for they pay only eight *mids*, in accordance with the rate of duty imposed at the period when the Turks first conquered Jerusalem, whilst olive trees of later growth pay half the crop.*

Above the garden is a paved alley about four feet broad, walled off from the other parts; for they say it is accursed by the footsteps of Judas Iscariot, and held in abhorrence by the followers of every creed.

This garden of Gethsemane occupies the very spot one's eyes would turn to, looking up from the page of Scripture. It was very near one of the most thronged and busy parts of Jerusalem, and yet lay so low in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, that not a sound from the busy hum of life could have reached its profound depth. On the west, the city walls and the high battlements of the Temple almost overhang the garden, while on the east the still loftier heights of Olivet cast their dark shade over the scene of the divine agony. Fitly had Judas chosen this gloomy scene for the perpetration of his black crime.

The monks have here a grotto, which they show as the scene of the "agony and bloody sweat." Always these grottoes!

Grotto of the Agony.

The Mount of Olives consists of a range of four mountains, with summits of unequal altitudes. The highest rises from the garden of Gethsemane, and is the one fixed on as the place of our Saviour's ascension. About half-way up is a ruined monastery, built, according to the monks, over the spot where Jesus sat down and wept over the city, and uttered that prediction which has since been so fearfully verified. The view from the summit embraces, perhaps, more interesting objects than any other in the world—the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Garden of Gethsemane and the city of Jerusalem, the plains of Jericho, the Valley of the Jordan, and the Dead Sea.

On the top of the mountain is a miserable Arab village, in the centre of which is a small mosque enclosing the stone which bears the foot-print shown as that of our Lord. From here the ascension took place. An Arab kept the key and allowed us to enter. After the kissing and mumbling of paternosters had subsided, he opened a store of little square stones that are picked up about the hill, and rubbing them on the foot-print gave us all one a piece. The pilgrims receive them as invaluable testimonies of their pious journey.

* Prokesch, Reise ins heilige Land. 1829.

Although, within a Turkish mosque, the Christians have always had free permission to visit this relic. As the Mohammedans possess a foot in their own temple, which they revere as well as the stone on which it is impressed, there is a fellow-feeling that gains more indulgence from them for this particular act of idolatry.

Descending again to the ruined monastery, I sat down to survey and muse over the favoured and fallen Jerusalem. From this spot is obtained the best view of the city, the one from which the traveller receives his final and remembered impression. Next to the large mosque, the most conspicuous objects are the two domes of the church of the sepulchre,—both of them, I think, extremely ugly; one is black, and the other white. The walls are picturesque, and reminded me of bows and arrows, and lances, and both of the wars of the crusades. The town is a singular confusion; the houses are white and irregularly built, intermingled with minarets and countless little domes. All within was as still as death; and the only apparent sign of life was the straggling figure of a Mussulman, with his slippers in his hand, stealing up the long court-yard to the threshold of the mosque. The Mosque of Omar, like the great mosque at Mecca, is regarded with far more veneration than even that of St. Sophia, or any other edifice of the Mohammedan worship; and to this day the Koran or the sword is the doom of any bold intruder within its sacred precincts. At its northern extremity is the Golden Gate, for many years closed and flanked with a tower, in which a Mussulman soldier is constantly on guard; for the Turks believe that by that gate the Christians will one day enter and obtain possession of the city—city of mystery and wonder, and still to be the scene of miracles!

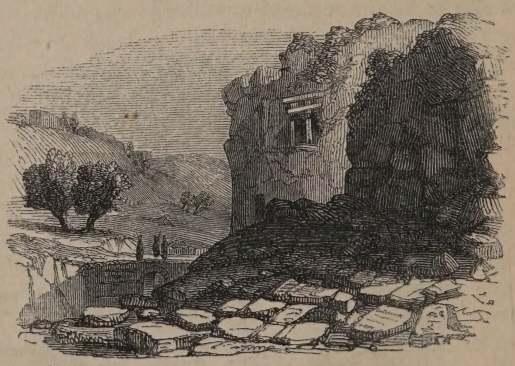
View of the Great Mosque from the City Walls.

While I was surveying the town from this spot, mid-day sounded, and suddenly from every dome and minaret the muezzin called the faithful to

prayer. It was Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath. The chanting was very magnificent, and had a magical effect upon all within sound of it. The gates were closed, and the guards abandoned their posts and hastened to the mosque. The mollawies, like birds in their cages, sang away in emulation of each other, while their notes, purposely prolonged till their breath could sustain them no longer, rang through the rocky hills around. I never witnessed so singular a scene. The voices of some of the priests were powerful beyond belief, and all were exceedingly sweet. Crowds of people filled the court of the temple, drawing slowly towards it; dervishes with solemn steps moved along the green; and women, enveloped in white sheets, appeared like funereal figures, shuffling along at a distance from the profane glances of men.

I had a telescope in my hand, and sat during the continuance of prayer in the spot whence I could best look into the mosque of Omar, and notice the devotion of all collected about it. In an hour the service was at an end, the crowd diminished, the guards returned to their posts, and the gates were again opened. The scene soon after became of a very different nature; finely-dressed Turks rode down the steep to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or wound along the Vale of Hinnom to that of Nehemiah, to enjoy themselves in "fantasia," a word that has been very generally adopted from the Italian into the Arabic of Syria, and the construction of which seems to be nearly as wide as its circulation.

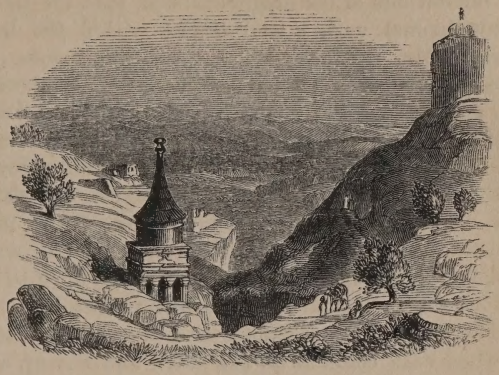
Returning along the valley of Jehoshaphat, and passing along its eastern sides, we came to the great burying-ground of the Jews. It looks more like a paved court, and I walked over it without at first perceiving it. Among the monuments are four unique in their appearance and construction, and known from time immemorial as the tombs of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, St. James, and the prophet Zachariah. All are cut out of the solid rock. The tomb of Absalom is a single stone as large as an ordinary two-story house, and ornamented with twenty-four semi-columns of the Doric order, supporting a triangular pyramidal top. The top is battered and defaced, and no one, whether Muslim, Jew, or Christian, ever passes through the Valley of Jehoshaphat without casting a stone at the sepulchre of the rebellious son. No regular entrance to it has ever been discovered; and the only way of getting into the interior is by a hole broken for the purpose in one of the sides. Notwithstanding the specific names given to these tombs, it is altogether uncertain to what age they belong; and it is generally con-



Jewish Burial Ground.

sidered that the style of architecture precludes the supposition that they are the work of Jewish builders.

As we passed along we saw a young girl kissing the tomb of Zachariah, and weeping as if her heart would break. My servant asked her rather roughly what she was crying about; and the poor girl looking at him for a moment burst into a flood of tears, and told him that she was weeping over the tomb of the blessed prophet.



Tomb of Absalom.

Proceeding onwards through the valley, we found the whole face of the precipitous rock, upon its eastern side, excavated into one vast and almost continuous catacomb, consisting of chambers of various sizes. Some of them were simple square apartments, formed to contain a single corpse, and closed by a stone door, fitted into a groove round the entrance, so accurate that a seal might have been applied at the joining to secure the sepulchre; and the first of them that I visited at once explained to me the form of the tomb of the Arimathean nobleman. These sepulchral grots are continued all down the valley of Siloam, having galleries, stairs, and small terraces cut out of the rock, leading from one to the other. They are all now inhabited, and they, with some mud-built huts at the bottom of the valley, constitute the village of Siloam, which contains upwards of 1500 Arabs—a vicious, quarrelsome, and dishonest set of people, and noted for such propensities for centuries past. On my first visit to this place, happening to poke my head into one of the cryptæ, I was startled not a little by the wild unearthly scream of an old Arab crone who inhabited the interior. The noise she made became the signal for a general outcry; the dwellers in the different caves popped their heads out from their holes like so many beavers reconnoitring an enemy; the children ran shouting in all directions; curses fell fast and heavy on the Giaour and the Nazarene; and had I got into the harem of the pasha, the alarm could not have been greater than that which I excited among the whole Troglodyte population of this cemetery of the living. I made a hasty retreat amidst the general uproar; and took good care never to venture again so far upon a tomb-hunting expedition into Siloam.

The Fountain of the Virgin (29) is a deep excavation in the solid rock, into which one descends by two successive flights of steps. The water flows hence by a subterraneous passage under the hill, Ophel, to the Pool of Siloam (24); but whence does the fountain itself derive its supply? The often-repeated quotation,

"Siloah's brook that flowed
Fast by the Oracle of God,"

is hardly consistent with the idea, that the head of the stream should be so remote from the temple as is this fountain; but there is a tradition among the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, that the latter is connected by an artificial channel with a well placed within the inclosure of the Mosque of Omar; Mr. Wilde even gives the dimensions of the passage, though it does not appear he himself explored it. He rests his proof of its existence on a story current in Jerusalem, that the rebellion of that city against Ibrahim Pasha was begun by the Arabs of Siloam, who made their way into the interior by creeping through this subterraneous conduit. The fact may have been so, and less likely tales figure unquestioned in grave histories; but we have heard another solution of the mystery. The Governor of Jerusalem, at the time the rebellion broke out, was the son of the Sheikh of Siloam; he probably left one of the gates open to his father's tribe, and then set the story afloat to cover his own treason.*

The Lower Pool of Siloam is a deep square cistern, lined with masonry, adorned with columns at the sides, and having a flight of steps leading to the bottom; beyond it the brook presents itself as a beautiful stream, that runs winding and murmuring through the valley. The water has a peculiar taste, sweetish and very slightly brackish, but not disagreeable. A very remarkable circumstance is related of this pool and fountain:—It is reported that the water in them is subject to a daily tide; and by some writers it is stated to ebb and flow under lunar influence. A woman of Siloam, who was accustomed to frequent the place every day, informed us that the flowing of the water occurs at irregular intervals, sometimes two or three times a-day, and sometimes in summer once in two or three days. She said she had seen the fountain dry, and men and flocks, dependent on it, gathered round and suffering from thirst, when all at once the water would begin to boil up from under the steps, and (as she said) from the bottom in the interior part, and flow off in a copious stream.†

In order to account for this irregularity the common people say that a great Dragon lies within the fountain; when he is awake he stops the water; when he sleeps it flows. So much for Arab philosophy; that of the West has been exhausted upon ingenious arguments to account for this extraordinary phenomenon, the wonder and the admiration of the pilgrim and the traveller. After all, the simple explanation offered by Mr. Wilde is very probably the true one:—The stream or outlet from the lower pool is conducted by artificial channels through the gardens and parterres that lie immediately beneath it in the valley; and it is the chief source of their fertility. Now as there is little water in the pool during the dry season, the Arabs dam up the several streams in order to collect a sufficient quantity in small ponds adjoining each garden; and this they must all do at the same time, or there would be an unfair division of the fertilising fluid. These dams are generally made in the evening, and the water is drawn off in the morning or sometimes two or three times a day; and thus the opening and closing of the dams produce the appearance of an ebb and flow in the fountains.

* Schubert, Reise in das Morgenland. † Dr. Robinson.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXCURSION TO BETHLEHEM AND HEBRON, TO THE PLAIN OF JERICHO AND THE DEAD SEA.*

THE excursion from Jerusalem to Jericho is not without danger to those who attempt it in insufficient force; for the pasha's writ does not run beyond Jordan, and from the hill summits of Moab, which afforded Moses a view of the land he was forbidden to enter, the Bedouin now overlooks the plain below, and occasionally swoops upon his prey. Accordingly we thought it advisable to obtain an escort, though our own party was tolerably strong; and we made an agreement with a sheikh named Suleiman, who was recommended to us by the monks as a trusty man. He brought with him ten mounted Bedouins and six on foot to accompany us.

It was a lovely morning as we rode out at the Yaffa-gate, where Suleiman drew our attention to what he considered an interesting memento that had hitherto escaped our attention. Three flat circular cavities were cut in the stone-work, each of them a foot in diameter. These he said were intended to commemorate the extraordinary cheapness that prevailed many years ago, when a loaf of that size cost only one para.† We rode down the side of Zion hill, a little way along the Valley of Hinnom, and ascended the Hill of Evil Counsel over which lies the road to Bethlehem.

We met several flocks of sheep, preceded by their shepherds, moving slowly to Jerusalem, and at once the full force of all the beautiful imagery, and the many touching similes of Scripture, derived from such scenes and associations, came vividly to my mind. Not one of the docile creatures ventured before the shepherd, but they stopped or quickened their paces as he did; or if a young and froward one lagged behind or strayed to either side, a single word from their leader, often a very look, brought it back and checked its wanderings. It is almost incredible the influence the shepherds of Palestine have acquired over their flocks; many of them have no dogs, but each man's sheep "know his voice and follow him," and "he careth for the sheep." He sleeps among them at night, and in the morning leads them forth to pasture; always walking before them, guiding them to those places where they can enjoy the best food, and resting when he thinks they have had enough, or during the heat of the day, in some cool shady place, where they all immediately lie down around him. He has generally two or three favourite lambs that do not mix with the flock, but follow close at his side, frisking and fondling about him like dogs, and when they are weary, he carries them in his bosom. It was probably to such shepherds as these that the angel announced the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth.‡

We next passed the gloomy, prison-like Greek Convent of Elias, and there lost sight of Jerusalem. A little beyond this is the tomb of Rachel, a small building with a whitened dome, and having within it a high oblong monu-

* Here we again join company with Hackländer's party (see page 165). This time it is more numerous than when he crossed over Lebanon, a painter and a physician, both Germans, being added to it.

† Forty paras make a piastre: a piastre is less than two-pence half-penny English. ‡ Wilde.

ment, built of brick and stuccoed over. I thought of Jacob's words in his last hour, when dwelling on the only indelible remembrance that earth seemed to claim from him. The long exile, the converse with the angels of God, the wealth and greatness which had gathered round him, all yield to the image of the loved and faithful wife—"And as for me, Rachel died by me, in the way from Bethlehem, and I buried her there."

The spot is as wild and solitary as can well be conceived; no palms or cypresses give their shelter from the blast; not a single tree spreads its shade where rest the ashes of the beautiful mother of Israel. Yet there is something in this sepulchre in the wilderness that excites a deeper interest than more splendid or revered ones. Other tombs the traveller looks at with careless indifference; beside that of Rachel, his fancy wanders to "the land of the people of the East;" to the power of beauty, that could so long make banishment sweet; to the devoted companion of the wanderer, who deemed all troubles light for her sake. No one can stand by this spot without an earnest wish, and almost a conviction, that it is one of those about which tradition has not erred; and whether this be Rachel's tomb or not, I could not but remark, that while youth and beauty have faded away, and the queens of the East have died and been forgotten, and Zenobia and Cleopatra sleep in unknown graves, year after year thousands of pilgrims are thronging to the supposed last resting-place of a poor Hebrew woman.

The Muslims have surrounded most of the burial places of the chief characters of the Old Testament with more pomp and stately observance than this; but the tribute they pay to Rachel's remains is far more sincere and impressive than walls of marble or gilded domes: the desire the Turks feel that their ashes may rest near hers is singular and extreme. All round this simple tomb lie thickly strewn the graves of the Muslims. A trait such as this, speaks more for the character of this people than many volumes written in their praise; for it cannot be for any greatness, or wisdom, or holiness, in her who sleeps beneath, (for which qualities they show so much respect to the sepulchres of Abraham, of David, and of his son,) but simply for the high domestic virtues and qualities which belonged to Rachel: she was a devoted wife, and an excellent mother, as well as the parent of a mighty people; and for these things do the Turks venerate her memory.

It is a scene of no common interest, when a funeral train issues from the gate of the city, and passes slowly over the plain of Rephaim to the lonely sepulchre. Were a Jew to cross the procession at this moment, he would be treated with deep scorn and hatred by the very people who are about to kneel round the ashes of one of his ancestry. Deeply fallen nation! forbidden even to draw near or bow down at the place that is full of the remembrance of its ancient greatness.*

From this spot, until we approached Bethlehem, the country was stony and uncultivated, though it hardly deserves the epithet barren; for the fields where Ruth, the Moabite, gleaned after the reapers of Boaz, might again be rendered productive if a proper system of agriculture were adopted; but this is only practicable under the walls of considerable towns. Within two miles of Bethlehem, fields are permitted to be waste that once amply rewarded

* Carne, Recollections of Travels in the East. Stephens.

the labours of a numerous peasantry. Now it is useless to till them: the Bedouins, who are always in the vicinity, seize the fruit and corn even before they come to maturity, and the incursion of a single night is often sufficient to frustrate the industry of a whole year. Even in broad day light these barbarians do not hesitate to drive their beasts through fields of wheat under the owner's eye, and they graze their animals upon them without scruple. Under such discouragements the people of Bethlehem naturally turn their attention to other employments than agriculture: most of them are engaged in manufacturing those articles of sacred merchandise that supply the bazaars and warehouses in the holy city, and from the moment our party was espied, we were beset by the clamorous importunities of a multitude of bead-hawkers and relic-sellers. In the streets several Bedouin blacksmiths were at work. The rude and simple character of their temporary forges attracted our attention. The bellows they employed was a most primitive instrument, being nothing more than a goat-skin bag, such as we read of being used by the early Greeks; it was worked by the smith's wife, who pressed the sides together, and then drew them asunder to admit the air.*

The first appearance of Bethlehem is very striking in whatever direction it is approached; and it does not require even the hallowed scenes and the associations connected with its history—though they certainly give it an additional interest—to arrest the attention of the traveller, and bid him gaze upon the picturesque hill that rises in parterres of vineyards, almond groves, and fig plantations, watered by gentle rivulets that murmur through these terraces; and diversified by the tower and the wine-press. It is a straggling village with one principal street, and is said to contain about 3000 inhabitants, most of them Arab Christians, and a peculiarly determined race, who give their oppressive rulers no little trouble. We proceeded to the fortress-like convent, and saw in its low door a curious evidence of the turbulence of the land. It is not four feet high, being made thus low to prevent the marauding Arabs from riding boldly into the house. The monks were at prayers when we arrived, and following one of the brothers through the great church down a marble staircase, and along a subterranean corridor, we stood in the grotto called the Chapel of the Nativity. This place is declared, grossly in defiance of probability, to be the very stable where the Saviour was born, and a niche in the wall contains a very handsome white marble trough like a sarcophagus, which is shown as the very manger in which the infant Jesus was laid.

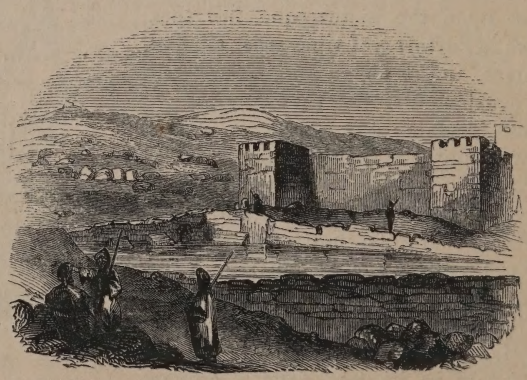
Women of Bethlehem.

* Olin. Wilde.

We passed the night in the convent, where we met with hospitable treatment. I was roused at daylight in the morning by a loud wailing beneath the window, which on rising I found overlooked the burial ground, where all the women of Bethlehem seemed to have assembled to call on the dead, as is customary among them on certain days after the decease. I immediately went down to the gathering, and drew fresh tears and louder shouts by my presence, while many inflicted severe blows on their breasts. One old woman bared her bosom, which required no great ceremony indeed, for she had but one garment on; and, throwing herself on the grave, thumped in good earnest. They had brought flowers and herbs to strew. There would have been much interest in a quiet moan; but so dire a yell set all sympathy to flight in a moment.

Under the guidance of one of the monks I roamed over the holy places without the convent. They are very numerous; among them is a grotto cut out of the rock, in which the Virgin concealed herself from Herod and nursed the infant Jesus forty days before she escaped into Egypt. Near this is another grotto, in which the Virgin, going to visit a neighbour with the child in her arms, took refuge from a shower, and a few drops of her milk happening to fall on the ground, the cave was whitened thereby as it now is. Both Muslim and Christian women believe in its virtue, and resort in great numbers to gather the chalk, which, dissolved in water and drunk, restores the current to a mother's breast should it have been interrupted.

I do not think there is a tree from Bethlehem to the Pools of Solomon, which lie in a hollow between rocky ridges about an hour and a quarter south of the town: all around has the aspect of a wilderness; but beyond the reservoirs the country becomes wooded, and the cave-fretted hills are marked with long strips of pasture and rich soil under cultivation. This appearance of the country continues to Hebron, on approaching which fig-trees and vines increase in number: the last have the appearance of large trees; from the size of the trunks one may fancy that they have been growing since the days of Abraham. The Vale of Eschcol, where the spies sent out by Moses found the grapes so heavy that to carry one bunch it was necessary to suspend it on a pole, is about half an hour north of Hebron.



Upper Pool of Solomon, Bethlehem.

The celebrated Pools of Solomon are really worthy of that great king: I had formed no conception of their magnificence. These large, strong, noble structures, in a land where every work of art has been hurried to destruction, remain now almost as perfect as when they were built: there are three

of them, of the respective lengths of 380, 423, and 582 feet, their least breadth 148, their greatest 250 feet; depth 25, 39, and 50 feet. They lie one above the other on the side of a hill, and are so constructed that when the water in the upper one has reached a certain height it flows into the second, and thence into the third. Small aqueducts lead from each of these cisterns to a main one that conducts the water to Jerusalem by a very tortuous course, and with considerable rapidity, as we could perceive by the open places left in it here and there. From the pools to Jerusalem cannot be much less than eighty miles by flight; and when it is considered that the aqueduct traverses a series of rocky hills, valleys, and ravines, its line may be estimated at more than twice that length.

A little to the east of the pools, towards the region of the Dead Sea, is a very large grotto, supported by great pillars of the natural rock, perfectly dry, without petrification or stalactites: it is a complete labyrinth within, and, as in many of the ancient catacombs, a man might easily lose himself for ever in its windings. It lies in the mountainous wilderness of Engaddi, and is supposed to be the Cave of Adullam, where David received the mutinous and discontented spirits of his days, and where, when Saul was in pursuit of him, he cut off the skirts of his garment, and suffered him to go away unharmed.

Hebron, one of the oldest cities of Canaan, David's capital before he conquered Jerusalem, is now a small town, containing seven or eight hundred Arab families. The present inhabitants are the wildest, most lawless, and desperate people in the Holy Land; and it is a singular fact, that they

Mosque of Hebron.

sustain now the same mutinous character with the rebels of ancient days who armed with David against Saul, and with Absalom against David. The place bears no traces of the glory of its Jewish king: earthquakes,

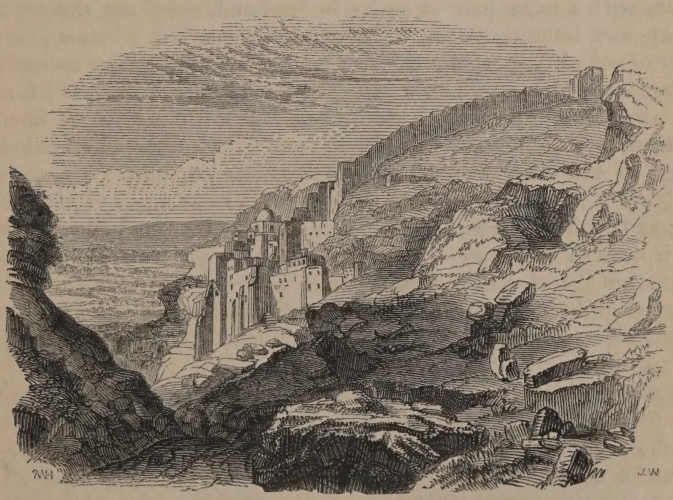
wars, pestilence, and famine have passed over it, and a small town of white houses, compactly built on the side of the mountain, a mosque and two minarets, are all that mark the ancient capital of Judea.

There is little to detain the traveller at Hebron. The great mosque is said to cover the site of the cave of Machpelah, nor does there appear to be any reason for doubting this tradition. In different parts of the inclosure the Mohammedans have built tombs for the patriarchs, while their actual place of sepulture is held to be in a cavern below, which even the faithful are not permitted to enter. The Muslims of Hebron are exceedingly bigoted; and when, with a Jewish companion, I stopped for a moment to look up at the long marble staircase leading to the tomb of Abraham, a Turk came out from the bazaars, and with furious gesticulations gathered a crowd round us; and a Jew and a Christian were driven with contempt from the sepulchre of the patriarch whom they both revered. The only Europeans who have entered this mosque are the Spaniard Badia (Ali Bey), travelling as a Mussulman, and Giovanni Finati, the Italian servant of Mr. Bankes. The account of the latter is exceedingly brief; and that of the former is so confused as to be unintelligible.

The day was far advanced when I rejoined my companions whom I had left behind in Bethlehem, and it was not till three o'clock that we set out for the convent of Santa Saba. Our road lay N. E.; at first, through the cheerful belt of cultivation round the town, but afterwards, over a wilderness of livid rocks. The sun had gone down, and night was coming on apace, while still we wandered on over the lonely hills of Judea, without catching a glimpse of the friendly convent. At length we reached the last eminence, behind which Suleiman assured us Santa Saba lay in the depths of a ravine, and we rested a few minutes on the edge of the precipice. I looked down in the direction to which the skeikh pointed, and I must own that, although I had had tolerably fair practice on the Balkan and Lebanon, I could not at first imagine how we were to make good our descent into such a seemingly impracticable gulf. Except in this one direction the mountain appeared to decline with a rapid but even slope to the Dead Sea: but here it at once plunged headlong down beneath our feet into an unfathomable sea of darkness. There, however, lay our way; and in God's name we began to grope along it.

Step by step we toiled for half an hour down a zig-zag ladder of rock, and then, even this semblance of a path ceasing altogether, I dismounted to lead my horse along the rugged slippery bed of a small thread of water, the deeper darkness and the small fringe of vegetation on their verge alone enabling me to distinguish the precipices about me from the rocks on which I stood. I was in advance of my companions; only one Bedouin was near me, likewise leading his horse, groping his way with his long lance, and uttering many a *Mashallah*, especially when the steel point struck fire from the stones. Suddenly I was obliged to halt, for my horse which followed close behind me, looking now and then over my shoulder, all at once stopped short, and resisted all my efforts to bring him forward. Holding fast by my sword, which I stuck between the stones, I felt all round me, and soon found we

had missed our way, for the rill that had hitherto accompanied us fell over the cliff hardly three feet from where I stood. I called to the Bedouin, who instantly came up; but at first he let his hands drop powerless by his side, like a man utterly at his wit's end. What was to be done? Turn back and begin again, probably to miss our way once more? I had very nearly made up my mind to roll myself up in my cloak and lie down where I was till morning, when the Bedouin, after creeping about for a while on his belly and peering round him in every direction, gave a lusty shout, hurried back to me, seized my hand, and made signs to me to stoop and look downwards. I did so, and saw a large dark mass in faint relief against the night sky; and which I soon discovered was a tower. The Bedouin now turned back up the bed of the rill and struck into a small side path which we had overlooked in the darkness. A few minutes more and we stood by the tower, which was an appendage of the convent; the main building was still considerably below us, but the way to it was easy, and all danger was now over. Presently we heard bells pealing; lights began to flit about, first one, then a second, third, and at last a whole galaxy; tall figures clad in black and each with a candle in its hand, emerged like phantoms from the abyss, and in a few minutes we were welcomed by the brethren, and led by them down a flight of four hundred steps into the convent, where we soon indemnified ourselves for the discomforts of our ride, in the enjoyment of the good things provided for us by our kind entertainers.



Convent of Santa Saba.

Few situations on the surface of the globe are better adapted to the tastes of an anchorite, or insure more complete seclusion from the world, than the convent of St. Saba. The dominion of sterility and desolation is here complete and undisputed. Besides this general recommendation the structure of the rock which forms the steep banks or rather walls of Kedron afforded

peculiar facilities for the formation of cells for the residence of a vast number of hermits. The channel is here three hundred feet or more in depth. It may be 60 feet wide at the bottom by 150 at top, the sides being perpendicular, but broken by a number of offsets, and forming a succession of steps, of various but inconsiderable width, ascending from the bottom quite to the top of the chasm. These towering cliffs are perforated in every direction with a multitude of cavities formed by the displacement of some of the strata, which are as regular and distinct as the layers of stone in a pile of masonry. Nearly or quite all the apartments within the monastery are formed of these natural cavities, that immense structure which stretches from the top of the bank to the very bottom of the deep abyss being only a vast front, including a multitude of cells, with staircases, corridors, and covered ways, &c. I must not forget to mention a large palm-tree growing in a wall on one of the terraces, and which was planted as they say by St. Saba himself in the fourth century: I am sure that every traveller will notice it as I did; one must be surrounded on all sides by such appalling sterility as here prevails in order to feel the full value of a tuft of verdure.*

The chapel, like all other Greek chapels, was full of gaudy and ridiculous ornaments and paintings; and among the latter was one that seems to attract the particular admiration and reverence of the devout. At the top of the picture sat the Father, surrounded by angels and patriarchs and good men; and on his right hand was a range of two story-houses, St. Peter standing before them with the key in his hand. Below the Father was a large powerful man, with a huge pair of scales in his hand, weighing sinners as they came up, and billeting on each the weight of his sins; below him were a number of naked figures, in a sitting posture, with their arms spread out and their legs inclosed in long boxes extended horizontally. On the left a stream of fire was coming down from the Father, and collecting in the mouth of a huge nondescript sea monster, while in front stood a great half naked figure pitching in the sinners like sticks into a furnace, and the damned were kicking about in the flames. On the right was Elias doing battle with Antichrist; and below was a representation of the Last Day, and the graves giving up their dead in almost every conceivable variety of form and situation.†

In another chapel dedicated to John of Damascus, behind an iron grating in a grotto of the rock was a most extraordinary assemblage of human bones, the remains, as the monks assert, of 14,000 martyrs, who were slaughtered in the valley.

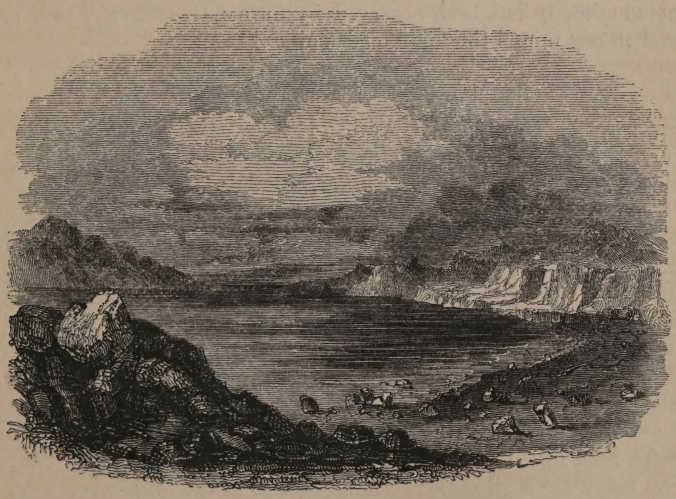
The principal, who was polite in his attentions, conducted us to the cell which formed the germ of this immense establishment, and in which its founder, St. Saba, spent many years of his life. It was remarkable above the rest for nothing but its greater rudeness and more neglected state, and for the interesting tradition belonging to it, which the venerable monk related to us with the air of a man who fully believed what he spoke, and who expected to be believed. This cave was originally a lion's den, and was in the actual occupancy of the monarch of the wilderness when the holy Saba first visited this sequestered spot with the pious design of founding a religious house. He was in a moment satisfied with its admirable adaptation to his

* Olin. Chateaubriand. † Stephens.

purpose, when he walked into the den of the lion, and told him that one of them must forthwith evacuate the premises. The magnanimous beast quietly and courteously retired, and left his noble lair to its higher destination.

In addition to its own strong, high walls, and massive iron doors, which give this convent the aspect of a feudal castle filled with bustling warriors, rather than that of a hermitage of peaceable praying men, there are two towers occupying higher ground a short distance from the main edifice. They seem from their position to be designed to guard against surprises, as the convent itself is proof against any open assault. The monks stand in sore dread of the Bedouins, who, when any cause of irritation exists, often lurk about the high cliffs that overlook the convent on the opposite side of the ravine, and sometimes fire on the inmates from that commanding position.

From the convent of Mar Saba to the Dead Sea is a journey of six hours, over and between endless mountainous undulations of singularly wild and desolate appearance. After about two hours we commanded from an elevated spot a very interesting view of parts of the Dead Sea, with the rose-tinted mountains of Moab in the east, showing the mouth of the river Jordan, where it empties itself into that awful reservoir. Though we were then at least four hours distant from the Dead Sea, yet such was the extreme clearness of the atmosphere, it seemed as if by descending another valley and topping another hill, we could step down upon its shores. Its waters were of deep purple, and their surface appeared as smooth as glass; while immediately above there hung a shadowy mist, which gave me the idea of sulphurous exhalation. It was a lovely picture to gaze upon; but how awful in the associations connected with it! One could but



The Dead Sea.

look upward to the placid and clear sky, and think of the dread moment when "the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from

the Lord out of heaven." Perhaps it was upon a firmament as lovely and glowing as that on which we gazed, that the dark clouds of God's fearful indignation gathered. The divine fury has subsided: the liquid monument of it remains.*

Losing the Dead Sea for a time, we reached another part of our route in the wilderness of Judea, whence we obtained a distant glimpse of the plains of Moab and the Jordan. This, in its turn, we soon lost, and were shut up between vast mountain ridges, the passes of which were exceedingly rugged and difficult. We journeyed on in patient anticipation amidst scenes the wildest and grandest, till at length, as the sun was getting low, and casting on all objects that richness of tinting so peculiar to these localities, the plains of Moab and Jordan, in their full extent, were stretched out beneath us, even as far as the Sea of Gallilee northwards, had our sight been strong enough to descry it, while, directly in front of us, the Asphaltine lake again took up its position in the picture, hemmed in between its long unbroken mountain walls, and bordered by a blasted plain, the most dismal and desolate that can be conceived. It is a naked sandy waste, through which, far away to the left, a green line marks the course of the Jordan; but this verdure ceases long before the river empties itself into the accursed lake. Here nothing grows but a few stunted shrubs, the leaves of which are crusted with salt, and their bark has the taste and smell of smoke. We looked in vain for the apples of Sodom; it does not appear that they are common so far north. The following is Dr. Robinson's account of this curious production, which he fell in with about the middle of the western shore:—

"One of the first objects," he says, "which attracted our notice on arriving at 'Ain Jidy was a tree with a singular fruit, which, without knowing at the moment whether it had been observed by former travellers or not, instantly suggested to our minds the far-famed fruits

"Which grew
Near that bituminous lake where Sodom stood."

"This was the *ösher* of the Arabs, the *Asclepias gigantea vel procera* of botanists, which is found in abundance in Upper Egypt and Nubia, and also in Arabia Felix, but seems to be confined in Palestine to the borders of the Dead Sea. We saw it only at 'Ain Jidy; Hasselquist found it in the Desert between Jericho and the northern shore; and Irby and Mangles met with it of large size at the south-end of the sea, and on the isthmus of the peninsula.

"We saw here several trees of the kind, the trunks of which were six or eight inches in diameter, and the whole height from ten to fifteen feet. Irby and Mangles found them measuring in many instances two feet or more in circumference, and the boughs at least fifteen feet in height; a size which far exceeded any they saw in Nubia. The tree has a grayish cork-like bark, with long oval leaves; and in its general appearance and character it might be taken for a gigantic perennial species of the milk-weed or silk-weed found in the northern parts of the American States. Its leaves and flowers are very similar to those of the latter plant, and when broken off it in like manner discharges a milky fluid. The fruit greatly resembles externally a

* Rev. G. Fisk. Lond. 1843.

large smooth apple or orange hanging in clusters of three or four together; and when ripe is of a yellow colour. It was now fair and delicious to the eye, and soft to the touch; but on being pressed or struck it explodes with a puff, like a bladder or puff-ball, leaving in the hand only the shreds of the thin rind and a few fibres. It is indeed filled chiefly with air like a bladder, which gives it the round form; while in the centre a small slender pod runs through it from the stem, and is connected by thin filaments with the rind. The pod contains a small quantity of fine silk with seeds, precisely like the pod of the silk-weed, though very much smaller; being indeed scarcely the tenth part as large. The Arabs collect the silk and twist it into matches for their guns; preferring it to the common match, because it requires no sulphur to render it combustible.

"The most definite account we have of the apples of Sodom, so called, is in Josephus, who as a native of the country is a better authority than Tacitus or other foreign writers. After speaking of the conflagration of the plain and the yet remaining tokens of the divine fire, he remarks that 'there are still to be seen ashes reproduced in the fruits, which indeed resemble edible fruits in colour, but on being plucked with the hands are dissolved into smoke and ashes.' In the account, after a due allowance for the marvellous in all popular reports, I find nothing which does not apply almost literally to the fruit of the ösher as we saw it. It must be plucked and handled with great care, in order to preserve it from bursting. We attempted to carry off some of the boughs and fruit with us to Jerusalem, but without success.

"Hasselquist finds the apples of Sodom in the fruit of the *Solanum melongena* (night-shade mad-apple), which we saw in great abundance at 'Ain Jidy, and in the Plain of Jericho. These apples are much smaller than those of the ösher, and when ripe are full of small black grains. There is, however, nothing like explosion, nothing like 'smoke and ashes,' except occasionally, as the same naturalist remarks, 'when the fruit is punctured by an insect (Tenthredo), which converts the whole inside into dust, leaving nothing but the rind entire without any loss of colour.' We saw the Solanum and the ösher growing side by side; the former presenting nothing remarkable in its appearance, and being found in other parts of the country, while the latter immediately arrested our attention by its singular accordance with the ancient story, and is moreover peculiar in Palestine to the shores of the Dead Sea."

The water of the sea is clear and shallow, and all the party, except the Arabs, undressed to ascertain the existence of the buoyant property attributed to it. The result of our observation astonished every individual amongst us. When swimming, it was scarcely possible to keep the feet below the water; when standing upright (treading-water as it is called) the shoulders were raised above the surface, and it was not easy to keep this position, as the shoulders became top-heavy. One of the party who could not swim, lay like a cork on the surface; and indeed it required great exertion to dive below. It was ludicrous to see one of the horses. As soon as his body touched the water, he was afloat, and turned over on his side; he struggled with all his force to preserve his equilibrium; but the moment he stopped moving, he turned over on his side again, and almost on his back, kicking his

feet out of the water, and snorting with terror. The taste of the water was detestable beyond description—salt, bitter, and sulphureous: but the worst of my bath was, that, after it was over, my skin was covered with a thick glutinous substance, which it required another ablution to get rid of; and after I had wiped myself dry, my body burned and smarted as if I had been turned round before a roasting fire. My face and ears were encrusted with salt; my hairs stood out, "each particular hair on end," and my eyes were irritated and inflamed, so that I felt the effects of it for several days. In spite of all this, however, revived and refreshed by my bath, I mounted my horse a new man. It seemed to me, indeed, that without it I could not have endured the fearful heat of these low shores.

The buoyancy of the waters of the Dead Sea is occasioned by their great specific gravity, arising from the large proportion of various salts contained in them, chiefly those of magnesia and soda. But the proportion of the saline solution, and consequently the specific gravity, would seem to vary somewhat in different parts of the sea, and at different seasons of the year; being of course increased by strong evaporation, and diminished by the influx of fresh water.

We made diligent search, so far as our opportunities permitted, for evidence bearing on the current tradition, that no species of fish can live in these waters, which are said to be so pestiferous as even to poison the atmosphere, so that birds venturing to fly over the sea soon fall dead on its bosom. With respect to this latter point, we had demonstrative evidence that tradition is at fault; for we saw a flock of gulls floating quietly on the waters, and when I roused them with a stone, they flew down the lake, skimming its surface, until they carried themselves out of sight. The sterility of the region and the want of fish and other food suited to the sustenance of aquatic fowls, sufficiently account for the rarity of the feathered tribes, without ascribing any pernicious influence to malaria and noxious vapours from the sea, though the region is indeed beyond all question an insalubrious one. As to the other opinion that there exists no living thing, no trace of animal or vegetable life within these waters, this is fully borne out by our own experience. Yet occasionally travellers have seen a dead or dying fish, and a few shells on the shore, but these have all belonged to fresh-water species, and have certainly not been native productions of the lake. This negative proof is the more decisive, as this shore is evidently much lashed by storms, which could not well fail of throwing upon the beach some specimens, if any existed, of the animal and vegetable growths of this sea. Large quantities of drift-wood are accumulated on the beach, which the rains have brought down from the mountain ravines, and the prevalence of southern winds has driven on the shore. No marine plant of any description is to be found among these masses, though they consist chiefly of entire trees, the branches and roots of which must have swept the bottom in many places in their progress through the water, and collected the sea-weed in their track, had any existed.

One of the most singular circumstances in the character of the Dead Sea is the deep depression of its level below that of the Mediterranean, amounting, according to the recent survey by Lieutenant Symonds, to 1311 feet, a circumstance which must have a remarkable effect on the mean temperature

of the region. The phenomena witnessed here are such as might naturally be expected from the constitution of the waters, and the nature of the surrounding district,—a naked solitary desert. The sea lies in its deep trough, flanked by lofty cliffs of bare limestone rock, and exposed for seven or eight months in each year to the unclouded beams of a burning sun. Nothing, therefore, but sterility and death-like solitude can be looked for upon its shores; and nothing else is actually found, except in those parts where there are fountains or streams of fresh water. The stories of the pestiferous exhalations, and the bursts of smoke that rise from this dreaded expanse, are a mere fable: there must naturally be an immense evaporation from it in consequence of its low position and exposure to the summer heats; but the character of this evaporation cannot well be different from that of any other body of water in similar circumstances.

The Egyptian heat of the climate, which is found throughout the whole Ghor, or lower valley of the Jordan and the lake, is in itself unhealthy; and in connection with the marshes gives rise in summer to frequent intermittent fevers; so that the inhabitants are a feeble and sickly race. But this has no necessary connection with the Dead Sea, as such; and the same phenomena might probably exist in an equal degree were the waters of the lake fresh and limpid, or even were there no lake at all.†

It was on this shore which we were now treading that the Knight of the Leopard encountered the Saracen Emir; and in the sandy plain above is the beautiful scene of the Diamond of the Desert in the opening of Scott's "Crusaders." The general features of the scenery along the northern shore of the Dead Sea are admirably described. The Diamond of the Desert is of course the creation of the author's fancy; and the only actual error is in placing the wilderness of Engaddi, which Scott has confounded with the mountains of Quarantania, but which is really half way down the borders of the sea.*

Our Bedouins rode with their heads muffled up in their thick woollen burnous, on the principle that what keeps out cold will keep out heat. Our horses suffered severely from the oppressive temperature, and toiled painfully along through the loose sand, in which they sunk at every step. We had been riding a good hour in this way, when the Bedouins on foot, who were in advance of the horsemen, suddenly halted, and clutched their guns, shouting out, "Arabee! Arabee!" The horsemen dashed back the muffling from their heads, and Suleiman galloped up a little sandhill to reconnoitre. Presently we caught sight of three or four figures a long way off from us in the plain, but they almost instantly disappeared among the bushes of the Jordan.

This little incident put us all on the alert for the rest of the way. The plain began to rise somewhat into hills before us, and we could distinguish much more plainly the green trees on the banks of the Jordan, after whose waters we all panted. Suleiman pointed out to us the village of Riha, standing north-west of us on a table-land, a miserable village of fifty or sixty huts, claiming to be the representation of the ancient Jericho. It contains an old square tower occupied by a small garrison, and known by the name of the House of Zaccheus; and from a bare knoll one solitary and blighted stem rises to remind the traveller of the title once belonging to

* Olin. Robinson. Schubert. † Stephens.

Jericho, of the City of Palms. Quarantania passes for the mountain where our Lord was tempted.

Mount Quarantania from the top of the Tower of Jericho.

The plain on which Riha stands is rich, and susceptible of easy tillage and abundant irrigation, with a climate to produce anything; yet it lies almost desert, and the village is perhaps the most miserable and filthy in Palestine. In the general appearance both of its construction and population, it reminded a noble traveller * of one of those collections of Scotch Highland huts which were once commoner than they have become since the introduction of sheep-farming. The entrances, indeed, of its hovels were wider, to admit the breeze which in Scotland it is an object to exclude; but a sort of ragged wretchedness is a distinguishing feature of both. Extremes often meet; and a sun-burnt Arab within, rolling in the hot sand before the parental mansion, bears no small resemblance to the weather-beaten children of the mist, with limbs so scantily clad, and the

"Glance shot woful through the tangled hair."

A host of gaunt and wiry-haired curs completed the similitude. The jungle extends for some distance, occasionally intersected by ravines in which thousands might remain in ambuscade; and we rode on under the conviction —never an agreeable one—that we might be watched by many whom we could not ourselves discern. Smoke, from the fires of Arab alkali burners, was frequent on the plain.

About two miles north-west of the village is the noble fountain whose waters are scattered over the plain: it is the only one near Jericho, and there is every reason to regard it as the scene of Elisha's miracle (2 Kings, ii. 19—22). It rises at the foot of a double mound, the top of which commands a fine view over the plain of Jericho, which needs only the hand of

* Lord Francis Egerton.

cultivation to become again one of the richest and most beautiful spots on the face of the earth. Its abundant waters diffuse fertility and verdure over it almost as far as the eye can reach; but alas! almost the whole of this verdure consists, at the present day, only of prickly shrubs, or trees of the thorny nubk. It is a remarkable instance of the lavish bounty of Nature contrasted with the indolence of man. Where the water does not flow the plain produces nothing.*

At last we reached the banks of the Jordan, and Suleiman led us to the consecrated bathing-place of the pilgrims. This is the last point at which the river displays any of that beauty that decks all the upper course of its hallowed stream. Immediately below this it narrows to ten paces, and there is not another spot from hence to the Dead Sea that can attract the eye of the traveller. Near its mouth the Jordan becomes a small, broken, and muddy stream; and here, if it were not for the associations connected with it, a man would turn from it as the most uninteresting of rivers. It was not our good fortune to have so timed our visit as to be present at the great baptismal ceremony which takes place every Easter; we must, therefore, be content, for the reader's sake, to be borrowers from others for a description of this strange spectacle. Fancy, then, a vast encampment thronged with thousands of pilgrims of all ages and sexes, a bewildering medley of strange tongues and costumes. The order having been given to march two hours before sunrise, soon after three o'clock the camp is all bustle and confusion, and the beacons of bitumen are seen slowly moving towards the river. Our reporter and his party having been assigned a special guard, advanced in a different line from the pilgrims, and arrived before them, so as to have full opportunity for inspecting their proceedings.

The river forms an angle at the bathing-place, having its bank covered with long coarse grass, tall reeds, oleanders, tamarisks, and low brushwood. The width might be about thirty-five yards, and the stream was running with the precipitous fury of a rapid. The bank was steep, shelving off abruptly to deep water. The first who prepared himself was a Russian, with hair of enormous length, who having stripped and enveloped himself in a long new shirt, dropped carefully in; and, holding on by the grass, dipped and shook himself, and dipped again, much after the manner of a duck that presages wet weather.

The baptismal robe worn on this occasion is preserved by each pilgrim to be used as his winding-sheet; and they believe that if they are cast into hell it will not catch fire.

The sun was rising over the tops of Abarim, and the river bank presented one of the most *unprejudiced* scenes which it has ever been my lot to witness. The main body of the pilgrims had arrived, and a general undressing commenced. There were men of all sizes and seasons, from the tottering octogenarian to the crawling bambino, who, being immersed with its head back and its mouth open, filled and bubbled like a bottle: ladies of all ages and angles, colours and calibres, from the Caireen Copt to the fair-skinned Russian. Of the men, some crept cautiously in, and reflected a moment before they went under; others leaped, spinning in like wheels, and, returning to the

* Dr. Robinson.

land, repeated again and again the same performance. Of the lovelier creatures, some bounced dauntless in, and, holding fast between two men, were well ducked, and came smiling out again ; others went delicately, and, standing ankle-deep in mud upon the brink, were baptised with basins full of the sacred stream. Nor was it enough that their bodies were consecrated —all their clothes were plunged, and they drank the unconscious element, not each out of her own hands, but out of those of a fellow-pilgrim, the two palms being joined together to form a cavity for the liquid; while bottles of every form and material were filled for distant markets.

Close to the scene of the hallowing rite was a tamarisk tree, which, bending over the water and brushing the surface with its trunk, headed back the current where it was rushing with the greatest velocity. Many of the votaries being carried with violence against it, came up on the other side ; and, if they had sufficient strength to hold on by the branches, they escaped a similar encounter from another tree that overhung the stream five yards lower down. We observed one man likely to be carried in the above direction, but, retaining his presence of mind, he struck into the mid-stream, and, swimming down like an arrow, landed upon a shelving gravelly bank, a quarter of a mile below. Soon after a Russian, either unable to swim or unprepared to resist the torrent, was dashed against the tree, and rising on the other side attempted to hold fast by the branches, but was carried against the second, and passing under it appeared no more, every one supposing that he was lost. He was afterwards thrown on shore below, exhausted but not dead. Immediately after him another followed in the same direction, and was drowned. This man had a very dark complexion, and it was at first asserted that he came from the interior of the Desert, where, never having seen a river, he had no idea of the power of water. But the pilgrims afterwards mustering, and finding none of their party missing, concluded that he must have been a Mohammedan, who had met his just reward for defiling their ceremony.*

The time may come when the body of that same execrated Paynim, thrown up from its asphaltine bed beneath the waters of the Dead Sea, shall be regarded with pious reverence, and fragments of it sought as relics by a race of pilgrims yet unborn. The conjecture is not unwarranted by precedent. About thirty years ago a human body, or what had the form of one, was discovered floating not far from the shore of the Dead Sea, and on taking it out it was found to be encrusted all over with bitumen and salt, in consequence no doubt of its having lain a long while in the lake. It happened to be the time of Easter, and the pilgrims hearing of it broke the body into innumerable pieces with infinite eagerness, believing it to be one of the ancient inhabitants of Sodom who had risen from the bottom. It was probably the body of some unfortunate Arab who had fallen in.†

The baptismal ceremony being concluded, the pilgrims returned to Jerusalem. But all did not return. In this barbarous country multitudes cannot undertake a journey even of eight hours without leaving part of their number behind. Remembering that the number that went was nearly 3000, the list of accidents is not proportionally great. But not one life need have been lost if the pilgrims had been less impatient and less inhuman.

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* Monro. † Carne.

On the Wednesday evening, in the crush made by the crowd on passing a perpendicular precipice at least 150 feet deep, a horse fell down it and was dashed to atoms. The rider had the address to slip off its back on the road at the moment of his falling. What most struck and disgusted me was the inhumanity of the pilgrims who passed their dying companions on the road, without even asking *en passant* how they did. I was near when the horse fell down the precipice, and not a soul waited except myself to inquire whether the rider had saved himself. The only answer I could get from those who I supposed might have seen it was, "*τί μέ κόφτει ἐμένα? τί ἰζένρω ἐγὼ?*" What do I care? What do I know? Yet these people went to save their souls by bathing in a river. This is indeed faith without good works.*

To return from this digression to our own proceedings: while we were making good use of the provisions with which the brethren of Mar Saba had stored our wallets, Suleiman distributed his men along the jungle, and even thought it necessary to send out videttes to the edge of the plain. At first we had supposed that his apparent fear of the marauding Arabs in this neighbourhood was affected rather than real, and that the cunning old fellow was, in fact, thinking more of backsheesh than of our safety: but we began to think more favourably of his vigilance when we saw, that even here, instead of seating himself with us under the shade of the trees, he never dismounted from his horse, but looked to the flints and priming of his pistols, hung his drawn sword from his saddle-bow, galloped continually backwards and forwards, and could hardly be prevailed on to accept a few morsels of bread and meat, which he ate in the saddle.

Two or three times during our meal we were disturbed by the shouts of our outposts, but we could not perceive anything that wore a suspicious appearance. But just as we had finished our repast, and were getting out our field flasks, that we might fill them with water from the Jordan, the cry of Arabee! Arabee! burst upon us from all sides, and Suleiman came thundering up to us, sword in hand, shouting Arabee! Arabee! as loud as he could bawl, and motioning to us to mount and make ready. The bustle and confusion that ensued may easily be imagined. Not believing Suleiman that I should be likely to have need of my sword, I had lent it in the morning to one of the Bedouins whose own weapon was out of order. Doctor B. had unbuckled his sword, and as it lay between us, we both snatched at it, he seizing the hilt and I the sheath, and so we ran to our horses, each with his share of the weapon. Our friend the painter was the first who sprang to horse, and got ready his double-barrelled gun. I was the worst-armed of the party, and knowing that I was not likely to do much execution in the *mêlée* with a scabbard alone, I snatched the short broad khandjar from Prince Aslan's side as he rode past me. The baron, instead of springing into his saddle, ran with his sabre in one hand and his field-flask in the other to provide himself at least with some water from the Jordan before the fight. I took hold of his horse's bridle and rode after him: shots were fired among the bushes around us; blows were heard as of

* Turner.

swords ringing on the trees; and our Bedouins set up a screeching as if they were all spitted. Presently figures were discernible all round us, and we soon found that we were beset by a gang of at least thirty or forty half-naked rascals, armed only with stout poles. There was no telling exactly which party was getting the best of the fight, for our Bedouins were completely intermingled with the assailants. Sometimes one of the latter rushed to the spot where we stood, but immediately started back on seeing our horses and weapons. The baron now mounted, and at the same moment three Arabs, somewhat better dressed than the others, made at us from the bushes, one of them armed with a pistol, another with a sabre, and the third with a matchlock. Our little doctor singled out the man with the sword, and charged down upon him; the fellow seemed disposed to stand his ground at first, but seeing the prince galloping up to join us, he wheeled round and ran back into the jungle. The fellow with the pistol let fly at the baron and me, and we heard the ball crash upon the branch of a tree behind us. The other had rested his matchlock on a sort of fork; but giving him no time to send us the contents, we struck the stirrups into our horses flanks, and rode him down. He of the pistol had taken to his heels immediately after firing at us; but before he could reach the shelter of the bushes, the painter had sent a ball after him that wounded him slightly in the leg; and a young Greek pilgrim, who had accompanied us from Mar Saba, fell upon him before he could recover himself, and gave him a sound thrashing with his stick; whilst the baron whacked away in like manner with the flat of his sword at the fellow we had ridden down. The whole fight had now luckily become more grotesque than formidable; and Suleiman and his Bedouins soon put an end to it; for, taking their swords in their teeth, and their pistols in their hands, they drove the Arabs before them like a herd of wild animals to where we stood, and in a few minutes we had them all at our feet, begging lustily for quarter. Suleiman made them a thundering harangue, and ordered them to sit down in a circle. The matchlock man, whom we had ridden down, and who was the sheikh of the party, humbly approached Suleiman, the hem of whose caftan he thrice pressed to his forehead in sign of submission.

After some parleying, in which the whole gang of Arabs occasionally took part with loud screeches, Suleiman asked the baron what he intended to do with the fellows; they were poor devils who had only a mind to help themselves to a little bread to stay their hunger. We knew that well enough; but what was to be done? If we gave them a few kicks and sent them about their business, we might expect that they would again waylay us that evening in the mountains in still greater numbers. Our wisest course therefore was to follow Suleiman's advice, that we should let them partake of our bread and salt, and keep them with us till we reached Jerusalem next morning. Accordingly we turned out the contents of our provision bags, and gave them to our vanquished foes. Thereupon our own Bedouins smoked a pipe with the seniors of the gang, and peace was established between us. Giovanni assured us, from what he knew of these people, that we might now be quite at our ease respecting them; they would sooner risk their lives in our defence than commit the least hostility against us. The fellow that discharged the pistol at us went up to the baron, as the sheikh

had done to Suleiman, pressed the skirt of his coat thrice to his forehead, and told us that he had purposely missed us. We believed as much of that as we liked.

We now set out accompanied by the whole troop. The sky had become partially speckled with clouds that mitigated the violence of the sun's rays, and prevented it from scorching us as it had done in the morning; the change was very welcome both to man and beast, and our Bedouins began immediately to frolic and play tricks upon each other. Grave and even listless as the Arab appears on foot, he is all sport and animation on horseback. Even the oldest men join in the boyish pranks of the younger. The most frolicsome by far in our troop was an old man with a snow-white beard, who rode an excellent gray mare. The sport consisted chiefly in throwing the jereed, and for want of proper missiles of the kind most of our cavaliers borrowed sticks from the pedestrians. A Bedouin would dart forward, seize his gun and pretend to fire at the rest. Another would make after him at full speed, brandishing the jereed, and when he came up with his antagonist he would hurl the missile at his back. The person attacked either endeavoured to parry the blow, or else—and this is the most difficult manœuvre of all—he bent aside for an instant so as to elude it, and then, just at the moment when the assailant had slightly overbalanced himself, he would suddenly catch him by the extended arm and try to pull him off his horse. It was exceedingly amusing to witness these feats, and we followed the two combatants at full gallop, leaving the pedestrians far behind us. Prince Aslan, who had for a long while looked on without taking any part in the sport, at last gave a challenge to the old Bedouin, who was usually victorious, both from the speed of his mare and from his own agility. The prince clapped spurs to his Circassian horse, and rode on about a couple of hundred paces in advance of the party, then twisting himself round in the saddle so completely that he seemed to sit the reverse way on his horse, he took his gun, loaded it, of course without ball, and fired three times towards us with incredible rapidity. The Bedouin now made after him, and aimed a blow at him with the jereed; but the prince bent so much aside that the saddle seemed empty. The Bedouin missed his blow, but knowing what would come next, he made his mare spring aside with so vigorous a bound that the prince could not reach him. The latter now took a staff and attacked the old man in his turn. The Bedouin stooped as usual to one side, but the prince drawing one foot from the stirrup sprang with his knee on the saddle, and laid such a stout whack upon the back of the old fellow, cutting directly downwards, that all the others burst out with an enthusiastic Mashallah, and extolled the prince's agility and address to the skies. The baron himself owned that he had never seen such able horsemanship before: and it was the more remarkable considering that Prince Aslan was mounted on an ordinary horse, which he had constantly used as a travelling hack for several months, whereas the horses of the Bedouins were in the best condition.

Suleiman also tried his skill with the prince, but could obtain no more advantage over him than the other. The prince, however, met with a mischance in this encounter that had like to bring him to the ground; but he recovered himself with a nimbleness almost miraculous. As he was bending

aside to avoid the sheikh's blow, his girth slipped so that the saddle was under the horse's belly, and we all made sure that now indeed he must come down: but no, he twisted himself back as quick as lightning, bestriding the girth instead of the saddle; and it was not till he had again cleverly returned the blow aimed at him that he threw himself from his horse, and put his saddle back in its place.

Thus we pursued our way over the plain, continually occupied with watching the equestrian games of the Bedouins. As this region is the most frequent theatre of their plundering exploits against the caravans from Jerusalem to Damascus, and from Mesopotamia to Egypt, the Arabs take advantage of some detached hillocks formed by the drifted sand, and have also thrown up artificial ones, to enable them to watch the approach of the caravans, themselves unseen the while, being concealed with their horses in holes which they scoop out on the tops of the hillocks. The moment they perceive their prey they dart off like hawks to apprize their tribe, and the whole body gallops to the attack. Such is the great business, the sole glory of these barbarians, and the honoured theme of their poets. The horses come in for a large share of the renown acquired in such enterprises, and tales of the brave doings of individual horses are constantly in the mouth of every Arab.

A troop of Druses on horseback attacked a party of Bedouins in Hauran in the summer of 1815, and drove them into their encampment, where they were in turn assailed by a superior force, and all killed except one man who fled. He was pursued by several of the best-mounted Bedouins; but his mare though fatigued continued her speed for several hours and could not be overtaken. Before his pursuers gave up the chase they cried out to him, promising quarter and safe conduct, and begging that he would allow them to kiss the forehead of his excellent mare. Upon his refusal they desisted from pursuing; and blessing the generous creature, they exclaimed, addressing her owner, "Go and wash the feet of your mare and drink up the water." This is a well-known phrase among the Bedouins, and intended to express their boundless admiration of such noble animals: it is a bold hyperbole, but one for which the history of English manners affords a curious parallel. We have heard of gallants in our grandfathers' days purloining their mistress's shoe, and using it as a cup from which they quaffed deep draughts of love and wine.—The following tale was related to us by Suleiman:—

"An Arab and his tribe had attacked the caravan of Damascus in the desert; the victory was complete, and the Arabs were already occupied in loading their rich booty, when the troops of the pasha of Acre, coming to meet this caravan, fell suddenly upon the victorious Arabs, slew a great number of them, made the remainder prisoners, and, having tied them with cords, conducted them to Acre to present them before the pasha. Abou-el-Marsch, one of the Arab prisoners, had received a ball in his arm during the combat; as his wound was not mortal, the Turks fastened him on a camel, and having obtained possession of his horse, led off both horse and horseman. The evening before they were to enter Acre, they encamped with their prisoners in the mountains of Saphad; the wounded Arab had his legs bound together by a leathern thong, and was stretched near the tent where the Turks were sleeping. During the night, kept awake by the pain of his

wound, he heard his horse neigh amongst the others which were picketted round the tents, according to Oriental usage. Roused by the familiar sound, and unable to resist the desire of caressing once more the companion of his life, he dragged himself with difficulty along the ground on his hands and knees, and came up to his courser. 'Poor friend,' said he, 'what wilt thou do amongst the Turks? Thou wilt be immured under the arches of a khan, with the horses of an aga or a pasha; the women and the children will no longer bring thee camel's milk, or barley or doura in the hollow of their hands; thou wilt no longer run free in the desert, as the wind of Egypt; thou wilt no more cleave the waters of the Jordan with thy breast, and cool thy skin as white as their foam; therefore, if I remain a slave, remain thou free!—go, return to the tent thou knowest well; say to my wife that Abou-el-Marsch will return no more, and put thy head under the curtains of the tent and kiss the hands of my little children.' Whilst thus speaking, Abou-el-Marsch had gnawed through with his teeth the cord of goat's-hair with which the horse was fettered, and the animal was free; but seeing his master wounded and bound at his feet, the faithful and sagacious creature understood by instinct what no language could explain to him. He stooped his head, smelt his master, and, seizing him with his teeth by the leathern belt round his body, went off in a gallop, bore him to his tent, laid him on the sand at the feet of his wife and children, and then dropped down dead. All the tribe wept for him, the poets have celebrated him, and his name is constantly in the mouths of the Arabs of Jericho." *

Anecdotes of equine fondness are great favourites with the Arabs, and they have an inexhaustible stock of them, some highly poetical like the one we have just related, and others not a little droll. The following was recounted to us at Tripoli on the narrator's "own knowledge." An officer who had gone round to collect taxes for the governor of Hammah was attacked and slain by banditti as he was returning from his expedition. His favourite mare, *knowing that he had a large sum of money about him*, fought over his body for some days, and would not have been vanquished at last but that she died of starvation.†

An Arab commandant, who offered a horse for sale to an Englishman, boasted as one of the great virtues of the animal that, under his protection, any one could lie down to sleep in the desert in perfect security; for if the Bedouins should approach, and the horse should fail to wake his master in time for escape by biting his shoulder, he would pick him up in his mouth and gallop away. ‡

We passed the remains of several aqueducts, built to serve the once prosperous agriculture of the plain of Jericho. They must together have formed, when in successful operation, a splendid system of irrigation, unequalled perhaps by anything now in existence; and they point to a degree of national and individual affluence and civilisation almost inconceivable to the traveller of the present day, who finds himself in the midst of a vast arid desert, covered with thorns, and encrusted with salt. The most beautiful feature of the plain of Jericho is the extensive grove—it should more properly be called a forest—that borders on the western side of the modern

* Lamartine. † Monro. ‡ Id.

village, and stretches northward perhaps two miles or more. On the banks of the stream it is an absolute thicket; in many places impenetrable by man or beast. The tree most frequent in it is the nebk, or lote tree, called also *sidr*, and by our Arabs, Dôm, which bears a small fruit like an apple, juiceless and mealy when ripe, but of a most refined and delicate flavour. I never saw a tree so abundantly and powerfully armed with thorns. I suspect it must have been the same which arrested the flight of Absalom.*

Stream near Jericho.

The sun had long set behind the hills of Judea, and the shades of evening hung over the valley, as we left it at the foot of the chain of hills that parts Jerusalem from the Dead Sea, and began to clamber up their steep ascents. We could only advance in single file through the ravines, and had to look warily to our horses, which could hardly find footing in the narrow clefts of the rocks. Our friend the painter was mounted on a very small horse, which happening to get its hoof locked between two stones in one of these narrow tracks, fell down, and occasioned its rider to cut rather a comical figure. The painter happened to have his feet out of the stirrups at the moment, so he had only to spread out his legs, till his feet rested on the sides of the cleft through which he was riding; and thus he stood astride like a colossus, over the fallen animal, which we had a good deal of difficulty in placing on its legs again. Imagination can hardly conceive a region more bleak and dismal than that through which we now travelled—nothing but rent and broken rocks, piled one on the other, whilst a half-withered vegetation but sparingly interrupted, without adorning, their parched yellow hue.

The night now came on with giant strides, and it was soon so dark that we could not advance another step without danger: Suleiman therefore looked about for a place where we could remain a few hours till the moon rose. The spot where we happened to be just then was not a very inviting place to remain in, by reason either of its ancient or its more recent history. It was so-called the Valley of Murder, the reputed scene of the event related in the parable of the Good Samaritan, and where, from time immemorial, till our own days, frequent robberies and murders had been committed. However, as it was not expedient to pursue our way in the dark, we were forced to overcome our scruples, and to follow Suleiman's guidance to some old ruins on a height near the valley.

Such a bivouac as ours that night it will hardly ever be my lot to make again—under the ruins of what was probably a Christian convent, destroyed

* Dr. Olive. Lord Francis Egerton.

by the Bedouins, before us Jericho, the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, with the Valley of Murder on the one side of us, and the naked, leafless height, called the Mount of Temptation, on the other. Hot as it had been all day, the cold was no less distressing now, as is always the case in these regions at night. We had left our cloaks in Jerusalem, and our thin garments afforded us no defence against the frosty air; to make the matter worse, we were hungry, too, and Giovanni hardly found coffee enough in our bags to make a thimbleful for each of us. Suleiman dissuaded us from kindling a fire, telling us it would be useless, as the moon would soon rise, and we could continue our journey. I rolled myself together like a hedgehog, and squeezed close under a piece of wall, to get a little shelter from the cutting wind, and, thanks to my exhaustion, I was soon asleep. I had not long closed my eyes, when Giovanni waked me, and told me to follow him, for he had something to show me. He led me through the massive heaps of ruins, on the other side of which I heard the shouts and the laughter of the Bedouins. One of them had discovered a cellar, of which the arch had fallen in, and in which a multitude of wild pigeons had taken up their abode. They now set about considering how they might catch these birds, and the means they took were as absurd as could be devised. The whole party sat in a circle round the opening of the vault, throwing large stones into it from time to time, to frighten the birds and drive them out. A swarm of pigeons would flutter up every now and then, whereupon the Bedouins tried to knock them down with their cloaks, which they stripped off for the purpose. Finding, however, at last, that they did not bag much in this way, they tried another expedient. Lots were drawn to determine which of the party should be let down into the vault, and the lot fell upon a very young man, who seemed very willing to undertake the job. The rest making a rope of their girdles, tied him fast, and let him down; the vault must have been deep, for it took six long girdles to find the bottom. As soon as the lad touched the ground, he cried out that he could not see his hand before him; whereupon those above decided, with a great deal of shouting, that firebrands should be thrown down to him. Dry twigs were hastily collected, a fire was kindled, and great heaps of the burning fuel were thrown down into the vault, producing an indescribably beautiful effect. It was just as if the surface of the earth had been burst open by a great intestine fire, round which sat the half-naked, sinewy Bedouins, peering down with eager, glistening eyes.

The lad below now strove to drive the pigeons up with his firebrands, and a whole cloud of these birds came to the opening, but flew down again several times when the Bedouins tried to strike them with their cloaks. At last the poor tormented birds, finding no other escape, made one bold rush, and got clear off between the hands of their laughing and shouting persecutors. The sport was now at an end; and after making fun of the young fellow below long enough they hauled him up again. Presently the full moon rose from behind the eastern hills, and shed a light almost like day on the way we had to go. Our bivouac was immediately broken up, and we were again in motion.

It was near one in the morning, and we were at some five hours' distance

from Jerusalem. We rode forwards as fast as the nature of the ground would allow, but after three hours' continual ascent both horses and men were so weary that we were obliged again to make a brief halt, for which Suleiman selected a small gulley tolerably sheltered from the wind, and containing scattered fuel enough to enable us to make a fire. The promise of a little backsheesh sent all our Bedouins in search of twigs and brushwood; a great heap was collected and fired, and the blaze shot up as high as a house amidst the loud shouts of the Bedouins. Every one lay down to enjoy the cheerful glow, only a few of our people going out from time to time to bring in fresh food for our fire. The restless temperament of the Arabs would not suffer them, however, to remain sitting there so quietly, notwithstanding their previous fatigue. They began to play tricks and tumble each other about on the ground, and to whoop aloud; and when Suleiman told them that if they got up a dance we would be sure to give them a backsheesh, they were all ready for it in an instant. We ratified the bargain, and had no reason to regret it; for though the promised dance turned out nothing very graceful, still there was something exceedingly picturesque and captivating to the fancy in the group formed by the Bedouins by the flickering fire in the wild ravine. Some thirty of these people, for several of our mounted Bedouins took part in the dance, arranged themselves in a wide semicircle on one side of the fire, while we lay on the other, and began a peculiar song. We understood nothing of the words, which were repeated over and over again without variation; the melody too was quite monotonous, and the song had little to deserve the name, except the measure, which, as it appeared to me, may be expressed somewhat thus: Al—lah—allahla—al—lah—allahla. At first the whole line stood motionless; they then began to nod their heads, then to bow slightly, then gradually more and more, whilst the singing grew faster and wilder as their bodies bent deeper, till at last their faces almost touched the ground; the singing then gradually became more slow as with diminished bendings they brought their bodies once more to an erect posture. When this was done they suddenly clapped their hands, and scampered round and round like mad for a few rings, and so the ballet ended.

Meanwhile our fire had been neglected and had died away: one of the Bedouins took a curious way to rekindle it. Bestriding the embers, he sank down nearly into a sitting posture, his burnoos forming a sort of funnel, as it were, over the ashes; he then suddenly started up erect, and this manœuvre he repeated several times, until the working of this extemporaneous air-pump at last revived the flame.

After the dancers had lain down a while to recover from the effects of their exertions, Suleiman pointed to the dawning east, and gave the word to march. We mounted our horses again, and in a short while reached Bethany, first passing the fountain of the Apostles, which lies not far from the town. There can be little doubt that the Apostles, and our Lord himself, frequently rested and drank here, on their weary way from Jericho to Jerusalem.

Nor is there any doubt about Bethany, the home of that happy family so peculiarly our Lord's friends during his latter years,—his own home indeed during his last visit to Jerusalem. It is a sweet, retired spot, beautifully situated on a slope of a hill to the south of Mount Olivet. The path to

Jerusalem winds round the Mount and through the Valley of Jehoshaphat, precisely to all appearance as it did when the Messiah rode thither in regal but humble triumph, and the people strewed their garments and branches in the way. They show you the tomb of Lazarus, an excavation in the rock, to which you descend by many steps. It lies to the west of the town, and cannot therefore, I think, be the spot.—When Mary rose up hastily and went out to meet our Saviour coming from Jerusalem, the Jews thought she was going to the grave to weep there; the sepulchre must therefore have been to the east of the city.*

Fountain of the Apostles.

From Bethany we had but a short distance to travel to Jerusalem; and we reached the foot of the Mount of Olives just as the morning sun was shedding its first beams on the high terraces of the temple that rose above us, on the beautiful cypresses that rear their pyramidal heads over the porticoes of the mosque of El Aksa, and the domelike orange-trees overshadowing the temple source called the Orange Fountain. The scene recalled to my memory one of the most beautiful Oriental traditions, invented or preserved by the Arabs. It is thus they recount the circumstances that determined Solomon in his choice of a site for the temple :—

"Jerusalem was a ploughed field; and that part of the ground where the temple is now erected was in the possession of two brothers, one of whom was married and had several children, the other lived alone; they cultivated in common the field which they had inherited from their mother. The time of the harvest being come, the two brothers bound their sheaves, and placed them in two equal heaps, which they left on the field. During the night, the one who was unmarried said to himself, 'My brother has a wife and children to support; it is not just that my portion should be as great as his; I will take some sheaves from my heap and add them to his; he will not perceive, and so will not be able to refuse them.' And he did as he had determined. The same night the other brother awoke, and said to his wife, 'My brother is young, and is without a helpmate; he has no one to assist him in his labour, or comfort him when he is weary; it is not just that we should take from the common field as many sheaves as he; let us rise and carry secretly to his heap a certain number of sheaves; he will not take notice of them to-morrow, and therefore cannot refuse to take them.' And thus they did. In the morning each of

* Lord Lindsay.

the brothers went to the field, and was much surprised to see that the two heaps were still equal; neither of them could account to himself for this prodigy. They did the same thing for several nights in succession; but as each of them bore to his brother's heap the same number of sheaves, the heaps always remained equal, until one night they met together, each other carrying the sheaves destined for the other.

"Now, the place where so good a thought had entered the heads of two men at one time, and had been so perseveringly pursued, must be a place agreeable to God, and men blessed it, and chose it to build God's house thereon."

What a charming tradition! how redolent of the simple goodness of patriarchal manners! How ancient and natural is the impulse that prompts men to consecrate to God a spot where virtue has bloomed on the earth! I have heard hundreds of legends of this sort among the Arabs.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE JEWS IN JERUSALEM.—TOMBS.—JOURNEY TO NABLOUS.

THE population of Jerusalem has been variously estimated according to the fancy of different travellers, from 1500 up to nearly 30,000. No doubt the number has varied much at different times; and entire certainty can never be hoped for where a census of the whole population is a thing unknown. After a careful inquiry instituted by Dr. Robinson, the information he found most worthy to be relied on led to the following conclusions:—Number of Mohammedans in Jerusalem, 4500; of Jews, 3000; of Christians, 3500: total population, 11,000. If to this we add something for possible omissions, and for the inmates of the convents, the standing population of the city, exclusive of the garrison, cannot well be reckoned at more than 11,500 souls.

The Jews inhabit a particular portion of the southern part of the city—the Harat-el-Youd—between the foot of Zion and the Mosque of Omar, and are not the least interesting of the objects presented to the traveller in the Holy City. This extraordinary people, the favoured of the Lord, the descendants of the Patriarchs and the Prophets, and the aristocracy of the earth, are to be seen in Jerusalem to greater advantage, and under an aspect totally different from that which they present in any other place on the face of the globe. In other countries the very name of Jew has associated with it cunning, deceit, usury, traffic, and often wealth. But here, in addition to the usual degradation and suffering of a despised, stricken, outcast race, they bend under extreme poverty, and wear the aspect of a weeping and mourning people, lamenting over their fallen greatness as a nation, and over the prostrate grandeur of their once proud city. Here the usurer is

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* Lamartine.

turned into the pilgrim, the merchant into the priest, and the inexorable creditor into the weeping suppliant. Without wealth, without traffic, they are supported solely by the voluntary contributions of their brethren throughout the world.

Independently of that natural love of country which exists among this people, two objects bring the Jew to Jerusalem; to study the Scriptures and the Talmud—and then to die, and have his bones laid with his forefathers in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, even as the bones of the Patriarchs were carried up out of Egypt. No matter what the station or the rank; no matter what or how far distant the country in which the Jew resides, he still lives upon the hope that he will one day journey Zionward. No clime can change, no condition quench, that patriotic ardour with which the Jew beholds Jerusalem, even through the vista of a long futurity. On his first approach to the city, while yet within a day's journey, he puts on his best apparel; and when the first view of it bursts upon his sight, he rends his garments, falls down to weep and pray over the long-sought object of his pilgrimage; and with the dust sprinkled on his head, he enters the city of his forefathers. No child ever returned home, after long absence, with more yearnings of affection; no proud baron ever beheld his ancestral tower and lordly halls, when they had become another's, with greater sorrow than wrings the heart of the poor Jew when he first beholds Jerusalem. This, at least, is patriotism.*

"It is curious," says Milman,† "after surveying this almost total desertion of Palestine, to read the indications of fond attachment to its very air and soil scattered about in the Jewish writings; still, it is said, that man is esteemed most blessed, who even after his death shall reach the land of Palestine, and be buried there, or even shall have his ashes sprinkled by a handful of its sacred dust. 'The air of the land of Israel,' says one, 'makes a man wise;' another writes, 'he who walks four cubits in the land of Israel is sure of being a son of the life to come.' 'The great Wise Men are wont to kiss the borders of the Holy Land, to *embrace* its ruins, and roll themselves in its dust.' 'The sins of all those are forgiven who inhabit the land of Israel.' He who is buried there is reconciled with God, as though he were buried under the altar. The dead buried in the land of Canaan first come to life in the days of the Messiah."

In the western exterior of the area of the great mosque, there is a spot approached only by a narrow, crooked lane, which there terminates at the wall in a very small open space. The lower part of the wall is here composed of stones evidently older than the rest, being much larger, measuring nine or ten feet long; it is unquestionably a remnant of the ancient temple. This is the nearest point in which the Jews are allowed to approach that revered site, and, fortunately for them, it is sheltered from observation by the narrowness of the lane and the dead-walls around. Here, bowed in the dust, they may at least weep undisturbed over the fallen glory of their race, and bedew with their tears the soil which so many of their forefathers once moistened with their blood. Were I asked what was the object of the greatest interest that I had seen, and the spectacle that made the deepest

* Wilde. † History of the Jews, vol. iii. p. 295-6.

impression upon me, during my sojourn in other lands, I would say, that it was a Jew mourning over the stones of Jerusalem.

> "Oh! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
> Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
> Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell;
> Mourn—where their God hath dwelt, the godless dwell!"

Every Friday in the year travellers may see all the Jews in Jerusalem clothed in their best raiment wandering through the narrow streets of their quarter, and under the hallowed wall, with the sacred volume in their hands, singing, in the language in which they were written, the Songs of Solomon and the Psalms of David. White-bearded old men and smooth-cheeked boys lean over the same book; and Jewish maidens, in their long white robes, stand with their faces against the wall praying through cracks and crevices. The tradition which leads them to pray *through* this wall is, that during the building of the Temple a cloud rested over it, so as to prevent any entrance; and Solomon stood at the door and prayed that the cloud might be removed, and promised that the Temple should always be open to men of every nation desirous of offering up their prayers; whereupon the Lord removed the cloud, and promised that the prayers of all people offered up in that place should find acceptance in his sight: and now, as the Muslim lords it over the place where the Temple stood, and the Jews are not permitted to enter, they endeavour to insinuate their prayers through the crevices in the wall, that thus they may rise from the interior to the Throne of Grace. The tradition is characteristic, and serves to illustrate the devoted constancy with which the Israelites adhere to the externals of their faith.

This touching custom of the Jews is not of modern origin. Benjamin of Tudela mentions it as connected apparently with the same spot in the twelfth century, and very possibly the custom has come down from still earlier ages. After the capture of Jerusalem under Adrian, the Jews were excluded from the city, and it was not till the age of Constantine that they were granted the poor privilege of gazing on their holy city from the neighbouring hills. At length they were allowed to enter it once a-year, on the anniversary of its captivity by Titus, in order to wail over the ruins of the Temple; but they were obliged to purchase this indulgence of the Roman soldiers, "buying their own tears," says St. Jerome, "as they had formerly bought the blood of Christ."*

I never visited the Jewish place of wailing, that I did not find it occupied by some of the Israelites; and whether noting the attitude of these mourners, or that of the hundreds of Muslim women I saw in the burial ground, the reflection often forced itself upon me, how long ancient customs are preserved in the East. Sitting on the ground is there the posture of grief. When the Israelites hung their harps by Babel's streams, they sat down and wept; and this attitude of mourning is frequently alluded to in other parts of Scripture. It is that adopted by the modern Hebrews who go to mourn over the stones of Jerusalem; and so characteristic is it of sorrow, that it was made by the Romans the emblem of their captivity, when

> "Lone Judea wept beneath her palm."

* Dr. Robinson.

This is also the attitude in which the lower order of Irish women sing the *keenan* over the graves of their friends at the present day; and in Ireland we find another similarity to eastern customs in the employment of hired mourners at wakes and funerals.*

We had still several remarkable spots to visit in the city and environs; the first to which we repaired was the sepulchre usually known as the Tombs of the Kings, a highly interesting relic of the olden time. Sallying forth at the Damascus gate we rode through olive-trees and cultivated inclosures, which are more frequent on this side of the town than any other for about three-quarters of a mile, when we reached a number of sepulchres hewn in the rocks around, containing one, two, or three chambers. The entrances, almost universally, were of a square or oblong form, with a heavy architrave above.

About a quarter of a mile further on are the Tombs of the Kings, as they

Tombs of the Kings, or of Helena.

are called, though the sepulchres of David and his descendants, as we know, were upon Zion. It is probable that the tomb we are now speaking of was that of Helena, queen of Adiabene, and her children. We descended through a passage cut in the rock into an open square having the appearance of a quarry; the sides of this court are perpendicular and hewn smooth, and in that which faces the east a porch is excavated of about ten yards in length by four in depth. Over this porch are ranges of sculptured work, very beautifully executed, in the later Roman style. They have unfortunately been a good deal defaced. On the left hand is the entrance to the sepulchral chambers, so filled with rubbish that one is obliged to lie down and creep in like a lizard to gain admittance. Through this we were conducted into a square chamber having three doorways on the three different sides, leading to other chambers, being in all six or seven, cut with mathematical

* Wilde.

exactness, and the walls perfectly smooth. In these were hewn recesses of different shapes for the reception of bodies, some being oblong, and others the segment of a circle. In one of these apartments was also a row of smaller niches, resembling in size and form the columbaria of the Romans; and in the floor were sunk quadrangular receptacles of the size of a coffin. Strewed about were fragments of sarcophagi, covered with carvings of fruit, flowers, and foliage, similar to those which ornamented the frieze of the portico.

On coming out of one of the chambers, at the very moment when I extinguished my light, the hole of entrance was suddenly darkened and stopped up. I had left a strange Arab at the door, and remembring the fearful thought that had often come over me while creeping among the tombs in Egypt, of being shut up and entombed alive, my first impulse was to curse my folly in coming into such a place, and leaving myself so completely in the power of a stranger. But I was taking the alarm too soon. It was only the Arab himself coming in. He, too, had his apprehensions; and, from my remaining so long within, began to fear that I had crawled out by some back way, and given his bucksheesh the slip.

Maundrell mentions having found one of the doors still upon its hinges: such, however, is not now the case. We, however, saw one door still perfect, and very singular and beautiful it was, hewn out of the same compact limestone that forms the rock, half a foot in thickness: the panels were as nicely cut as in the finest mahogany doors in this country, and the whole highly polished. It had originally turned on tenons of one piece with itself, resting on sockets in the solid rock, so that no extraneous matter was used for hinges, and it fitted most exactly in the door-frame, except that it did not touch the lintel by at least two inches; it shut apparently by its own weight, and required pressure to push it open. There was no kind of bolt or fastening of any kind about it. In several of these crypts were fragments of similar doors.

This splendid sepulchre with its sunken court reminded me of some of the tombs of Egyptian Thebes, which it also resembles in its workmanship, but not in the extent of its excavations. In its elegant portal and delicate sculpture, it may well bear comparison with the similar sepulchre at Petra, though the species of stone in which it is cut does not admit of the same architectural effect. It has usually been considered as unique in Palestine; yet it is not I believe the only monument of the kind in the vicinity of Jerusalem. It is indeed by far the best preserved, which has been owing doubtless to the difficulty of entrance, and to the utter darkness that reigns within. The Greek writer Pausanias, in the second century, in speaking of the sepulchres he had seen, mentions two as being worthy of particular admiration; viz., that of King Mausolus in Caria, and that of Helena at Jerusalem. This latter he describes as remarkable for its door, which was of the same rock, and so contrived as to open by means of machinery, once a-year, at a stated day and hour, and to close again after a short interval; all attempts to force an entrance at any other time would have been vain, unless the door was broken. In this exaggerated account we may nevertheless recognise the carved doors above described; while the passage also shows the celebrity

which the tomb of Helena had obtained in foreign lands. Taking all the circumstances indicated by ancient authors into account, there seems little room for doubt that the excavations, so long known in modern times as the "Tombs of the Kings," ought henceforth to assume their ancient celebrity as the Sepulchre of Helena.*

Tomb of Jehoshaphat.

South of Jehoshaphat and east of Hinnom is the Aceldama or Field of Blood, said to be that purchased by the Jewish priests with the thirty pieces of silver. It was not far from the stream of Gihon; and at the period of our visit there were still the marks and remains of bricks and *pottery ware* in the adjoining ravine; a place always likely to be used for their manufacture, as it contains the clay suited for such purposes, and is in the vicinity of a rivulet. There are here shown the decayed remains of a stone building arched at top, and excavated within to a considerable depth, belonging to a cemetery built by the empress Helena for the reception of the bodies of Christian strangers. A tradition existed, that the soil at the bottom of this pit possessed the strange property of reducing the flesh to dust within twenty-four hours, and did not lose its decomposing virtues when carried to a distance; for, by order of the same queen, two hundred and seventy ship-loads were transported to Rome, and deposited in the Campo Santo near the Vatican, where it was wont to reject the bodies of the Romans, and only consumed that of strangers. The interior of the Campo Santo at Pisa is also filled with this soil, and there it is covered with a rank crop of foxtail and other grasses.

Mr. Wilde has derived some exceedingly curious and interesting results from his researches in a tomb recently discovered and opened in this vicinity by the Arabs. The entrance was in the common form of a Doric pediment,

* Three Weeks in Palestine. Stephens. Dr. Robinson.

supported by rude pilasters, but with this remarkable peculiarity, that the stone door, which was still in its place, was hung, not on vertical, but on horizontal pivots, inserted into the upper part of the pilasters, so that to open it, it must be swung upwards towards the roof of the chamber. "It struck me," he says, "the moment I saw it, as being different from that of any other tomb I had ever seen or read of, except one at Petra, and one described by Irby and Mangles at Bysan near Tiberias." But the most remarkable feature in this catacomb was, that the three ranges of crypts, opening on the several sides of the chamber, contained the remains of *distinct* and *separate races of mankind*, nor was a single instance found of the skulls of one side being mixed up with those of the other two. Now, none of these curious heads belonged to the Jewish race, for there was not a single European or well-marked Caucasian head among them. Mr. Wilde was even daring and fortunate enough to secrete and bring home four specimens of these skulls; they have been examined by Dr. Prichard and other eminent ethnologists, who all agree that they belonged to those great divisions of the human family which are technically denominated the Ethiopian and Mongolian varieties. Thus, then, from all the concurrent circumstances connected with this tomb; its being situated on the site of the acknowledged Field of Blood; the character of its architecture, and the remarkable remains found within it, all of them belonging to foreign nations, and not to Hebrews, there appears a strong probability that this sepulchre was one of those tombs if not the actual and only one purchased with the thirty pieces of silver to bury strangers, and from which circumstance its site received the name of Aceldama, or Field of Blood.

Before I left Jerusalem I met with an accident that was near procuring my unworthy bones a resting-place on Zion. I was residing in the Latin convent, and, sooth to say, the apartment vouchsafed me was as desolate as the most rigid penitent could desire; there were days when the sun was veiled, and the rain beat against the single casement; and then the stone floor, mean flock bed, and cold empty passages without, were enough to sink the spirit. One evening I chanced to find in the convent a volume of Lord Byron's works—a singular relic in such a place; and thinking to make my cell more than usually snug, the better to enjoy so welcome a relief, I did not leave sufficient ventilation to carry off the fumes of the pan of charcoal that burned by my bed-side. The natural consequences soon followed; my brain began to swim; my limbs became almost powerless; I had just strength enough left to totter to the door, which fortunately opened outwards, and I fell on the flags of the passage, where I lay I know not how long, until one of the inmates of the convent found me senseless and bleeding from a severe wound in the head. The next day one of the monks said to me, as we were talking over my mishap, "How could you hope to escape being poisoned, with a pan of serpents under your nose?" At first I thought he spoke figuratively; but I afterwards found that he meant literally what his words implied. It is the universal belief throughout the country, that charcoal is of its own nature quite innoxious, and that the accidents which sometimes arise from its use, are occasioned by the serpents that creep into the stacks, and impregnate them with their poisonous breath.

I departed from Jerusalem through the Damascus gate, in company with rather a numerous party, among whom were a French colonel in the service of Ibrahim Pasha, his suite, a Maltese sailor, and a native of Cyprus. Our road passed by the foot of Scopus, the hill from which the legions of Titus obtained their first view of the city whereon they were soon to inflict so terrible a vengeance; and here they encamped to await the necessary preparations for commencing the siege. In about three quarters of an hour, a little to the right of the road, we came to what are called the Tombs of the Judges, excavations in the rock, one of them full of water. The entrance to the principal sepulchre is surmounted by a fine pediment, sculptured with flowers and leaves. In about three hours we were mounting Neby Samwil, the highest mountain about Jerusalem, crowned with ruins, which are *not* those of Ramah, the birth-place and tomb of Samuel the seer, though regarded as such by the Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans.* I stopped for a moment on the top of the mountain, and looking back towards the Holy City, saw for the last time the Mosque of Omar, rising proudly over the ruins of the Temple of Solomon, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the walls of Jerusalem, and the Dead Sea.

Native of Cyprus.

A little north of Neby Samwil, separated from its base by a narrow fertile tract, is the isolated, oblong hill on which El-Jib is situated. It is composed of horizontal layers of limestone rock; forming almost regular steps, rising out of the plain; in some places steep and difficult of access, and capable of being everywhere very strongly fortified. The hill may be said to stand in the midst of a basin composed of broad valleys or plains, cultivated and full of grain, vineyards, and orchards of olive and fig-trees. With the exception of the plain of Riha, it was decidedly the finest part of Palestine I had yet seen. It is not difficult to recognise in El-Jib and its rocky eminence the Gibeon of the Scriptures, the city near which the great battle was fought, during which "the sun stood still on Gibeon."

An hour beyond El-Jib we passed through the thrifty-looking village of Ram Allah, occupied by a population of eight or nine hundred, all Greek christians. We had not proceeded far from this place when we were disturbed by a loud quarrel between one of our Muslim Muleteers and a Christian of Ram Allah who had joined the party. The latter showed a bloody face, having been beaten, he said, by a Muslim in a neighbouring

* Dr. Robinson.

village. He was in a state of great excitement, and said that he was going to take us to his enemy that we might beat him in return. His claim on us was founded solely on the fact of his being a christian; and it was some time before he could be persuaded that it was none of our business to interfere in his quarrel.

We finished our day's journey about a mile eastward of Ram Allah, and stopped an hour before sunset at the entrance of the village of El-Bir, so called from a clear fountain at the foot of the hill on which the houses stand. It is probable the Beeroth of Scripture, and not Michmash, as usually supposed. We took possession of a ruined arch that serves as a khan, and stands among many at the bottom of the town. It is open at both ends, and the wind blew through it, while the rain drizzled from the broken roof. We swept the floor, and spreading our carpets upon it, placed the cattle against the upper entrance, while the villagers crouched in the mouth of the other. Thus with a blazing log of wood, which we soon arranged, all promised very well, when the colonel, who thought his dignity compromised by this humble retreat, sent his interpreter to trumpet our arrival through the village, and obtain, if possible, a house.

I have a horror of such civilities as the Arabs of a village are able to afford, and could not sympathise with the Frenchman in his joy at the discovery of a building for our accommodation. We would not divide our fortunes, however; and followed Monsieur Souf through the miserable streets to the highest point of the hill, where, exposed to the full violence of the wind, we found a solitary house, close to the remains of a large church which was built by the Empress Helena over the spot where tradition says the Virgin Mary sat, while, having missed our Saviour, after a day's journey, Joseph sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance before they returned to Jerusalem.

These ruins were walled round, and our cattle occupied such shelter as they gave. As we came on foot through the streets, leading our horses, the gentle dames of the village levied a tax upon our property in a very ingenious manner, by pulling the bedding which hung loose over the saddles into their huts. Anticipating a clamour when we should make the discovery, they took their husbands into their confidence, who acted their parts most admirably.

When we reached the airy castle we were to possess for the night, lo! our beds were gone. Hassan made an oration upon their inhospitality to the men who surrounded us. They affected to be shocked, and hoped we did not think it possible that they could have encouraged so scandalous an act. "You shall have your property," they all cried, "but will you not reward us?" They were promised a reward, and in a short time returned with the stolen blankets; then, telling the story, laughed at the success of the stratagem.

The door of the khan was so low that we were forced to crouch to pass through it. The room was full of smoke; so dark, and so close, that I fancied we had sunk into the infernal regions. "Open the window, if there be one!" we all exclaimed, and one of the party pushed a wooden shutter that let in a glimmer of day at the top of the wall, when a loud shout of

"Wullah! what dogs are these?" burst from the centre of the chamber as the light rushed into it, where, round a deep hole wherein lay a log from which all the smoke proceeded, about thirty men were seen squatted in a circle, smoking, and wrapped up in their large cloaks. They were like owls disturbed in their favourite darkness, and floundered and flapped about in a most ungentle humour. They insisted upon closing all up again, and we for a while submitted.

"There is a mat in the corner; sit down there; take off your shoes; and thank God that you are allowed to come in at all," cried a fellow bearded like the Saracen's Head upon a sign-post, with a large knife at his girdle. "What brings you here?" "Our own business," replied our interpreter; "and we wish to have as much room as possible, so you had better begone and leave us to ourselves." This modest request was near bringing affairs to a crisis with a vengeance. "Off with your shoes, unbelievers!" exclaimed a little shrivelled Arab, with the most intolerant expression of countenance I ever saw. "Out with them, in the name of God!" shouted another; while "Wullah, Yullah," and all the different variations and invocations of the name of Allah, escaped from the lips of the crowd.

We drew up into a corner, and stood firm; the sailor half drew his sword, we handled our pistols, and the French colonel began to chatter a mixture of languages that promised to perplex the matter as much as words could do for us. Monsieur Souf, who was of a peaceable turn of mind, kept aloof; while Hassan whispered to me, "Fa niente, signore—don't fight."

The colonel's address had rather a composing effect, although I believe not one word of it was understood. When it was over the men sunk down to their sitting posture, and allowed the window to be opened, that they might contemplate us at their leisure. We were by this time all in tears, from the pain of the smoke in our eyes. I was forced to bandage mine with my handkerchief, and peeped from under it every now and then at the group. They eyed us very minutely, and in a low tone among themselves discussed our appearance, which was not unlike that of a party of children crying at being kept in the corner. I hope this notion did not occur to the Arabs, for the Franks will scarcely be elevated in their judgments from our visit among them, if it did.

As we could neither get rid of the smoke nor enjoy the air while the crowd remained, we again proposed their departure, when the calm at once grew into a worse tempest than the first. Up they sprang, and cursed us most dismally, repeating constantly, "Wonderful! Are we not men? They come here to beard us in our own dens!" A loud clatter at the door, which was not calculated to resist much, broke it from its hinges, and in poured a fresh supply of people from the village, screaming out, "Bucksheesh, bucksheesh!" The wind and the rain, too, drove in upon us, and the sparks from the fire in the centre flew about the room. The adventures in Don Quixote's inn were nothing to those promised to us. We gathered together, and stood in front of our baggage piled up in a corner, and resisted by pushing and pulling every attempt to approach it. "Out with the dogs! Down with the infidels!" and such agreeable expressions, rang through the multitude. There was now no space to move, and we stood at bay; one hand holding a hand-

kerchief to our eyes, while with the other we used what defence we could to keep our ground.

We had not yet come regularly to blows, and were all anxious to avoid them. We were nevertheless in full expectation of a furious struggle every moment, when an old man, who had been conversing with M. Souf, called out, "Silence, my children, and let us hear them speak!" The colonel, who had just whispered to me, "I wish we had one of his highness's six-pounders here," advanced with his drawn sword into the centre, and commenced an oration, but in such an outrageous passion that no two words could be connected together. "Choich, choich—gently, gently," was all that we could say to control the impatience of his hearers, which I repeated till my throat was as dry as possible.

At length a most fortunate scheme struck the interpreter, who cried out in Arabic to the principal man, "What is your name?" "Abd-ul-Kerim," said he. "Then write it down, I pray you," continued the interpreter, turning to the colonel, "that Ibrahim Pasha may know how his chief engineer has been received while travelling on his service."

This speech fell like a thunderbolt among them. The colonel sheathed his sword, and drew out his note-book; I presented him a pencil, and we all gathered round him to assist in making the muster-roll. It was not necessary, however; the threat was enough, and one by one the crowd began to drop away, till the head man alone remained, who assured us that all that had occurred was meant most civilly; that while the women were making bread, the men usually came up here to smoke, for their wives shut the doors upon them until the sun sets.

In a corner of the room were three men, who had not taken part in the fray. They were natives of the East Indies, Mohammedans of Surat, who had been to Mecca and Jerusalem on pilgrimage, and were on their return to their own country by Damascus and Bagdad. If there be any merit in the toils of a pilgrim, these poor wanderers will surely reap the full advantage of it.

We could not fasten the door during the night, and kept watch alternately by the large fire which the head man of the village, to make amends for our uncourteous reception, supplied most bountifully with fuel from the shrubs around, for wood is scarcely to be seen. Occasional attempts were made by the villagers to enter our resting-place, but we firmly resisted them. The necessity of combating these attacks, and the still more tantalising one of the numerous insects in the place, prevented the possibility of sleeping. We were glad to be up when the day broke, and escape from so uncomfortable a confinement.*

We came in about an hour to the ruins of Betein, the ancient Bethel. Abraham pitched his tent on the high ground eastward of this spot, still one of the finest tracts for pasturage in the whole land; and here Jacob slept on on his way to Haran, and saw in his dream the ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Though surrounded by stony mountains, it was prettily situated; but it was utterly deserted, not a human being seemed to dwell in it.

* Skinner.

We were now entering the region of Samaria, and though the mountains were yet stony, a beautiful country was opening before us. Our ride lay principally along the edge of a wide valley, well watered and gloriously fertile. The green expanse of the wheat fields was refreshing to an eye accustomed for some time to the glare of the streets and surrounding rocks of Jerusalem. We passed several villages, among which I remember was that of Cowara, beautifully situated on the side of the mountain, overlooking a fertile valley, and all the women of the village were in the field picking the tares from the grain. Here I took a guide to conduct me to the Patriarch's Well, where our Saviour talked with the Samaritan woman.

In about two hours we were winding along the side of Mount Gerizim, whose summit was covered with the white dome of a sheikh's tomb; and passing one well on the declivity of the mountain going down to the valley at its base, we came to Jacob's well, or the Beer Samarea of the Arabs, distant rather more than a mile from the eastern gate of Nablous. It bears evident marks of antiquity, but was now dry and deserted; it was said usually to contain living water, and not merely to be filled by the rains. We had no line with us at the moment to measure the well; but by dropping in stones we could perceive that it was *deep* (John iv. 11), a thing very unusual in Palestine, where the water is generally preserved in superficial cisterns, from which it issues in a fountain; or else a few stairs are placed for descending into it. The depth as measured by Maundrell and recently by Homes is about 105 feet.

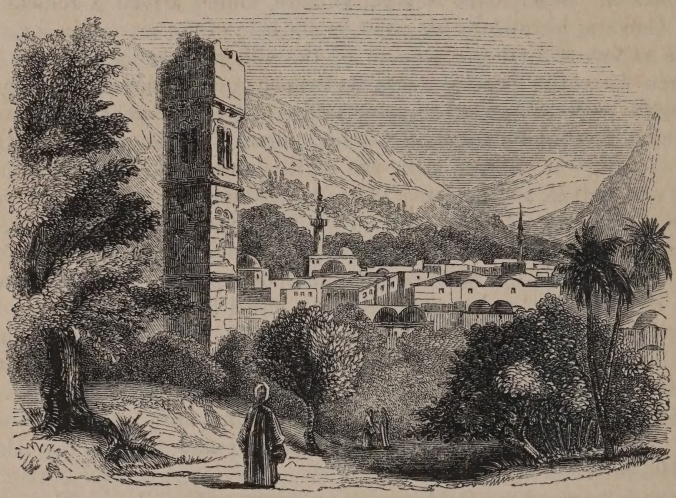
"I think," says Dr. Robinson, "we may rest with confidence in the opinion that this is Jacob's well, and here the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Here the Saviour, wearied with his journey, sat beside the well, and taught the poor Samaritan woman those great truths which have broken down the separating wall between Jews and Gentiles; 'God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.'"

Turning the point of the mountain, we came to a rich valley lying between the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal. Crossing this valley, on the sides of the mountains of Ebal is a long range of grottoes and tombs, and a little before coming to them, in a large white building like a sheikh's tomb, is the sepulchre of Joseph. I dismounted and entered the building, and it is not an uninteresting fact that I found there a white bearded Israelite, kneeling at the tomb of the patriarch, and teaching a rosy-cheeked boy (his descendant of the fourth generation) the beautiful story of Joseph and his brethren.

It was late in the evening when I was moving up the valley of Nablous. The mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, the mountains of blessings and curses, were towering like lofty walls on either side of me. A beautiful stream, in two or three places filling large reservoirs, was running through the valley, and a shepherd sat on its bank playing a reed pipe, with his flock feeding quietly around him. The shades of evening were gathering fast as I approached the town of Nablous, the Shechem or Sychem of the Old Testament, and the Sychar of the New. More than a dozen lepers were sitting outside the gate, their faces shining, pimpled, and bloated, covered with sores and pustules, their nostrils open and filled with ulcers, and their red eyes

fixed and staring; with swollen feet they dragged their disgusting bodies towards me, and with hoarse voices extended their deformed and hideous hands for charity.

We rode up the principal street; and at the door of the palace I met the



Nablous.

governor just mounting his horse, with a large retinue, officers, and slaves around him. We exchanged our greetings on horseback; I showed him my firman, and he sent a janissary to conduct me to the house of a Samaritan, a writer to the government, where I was received, fed, and lodged better than in any other place in the Holy Land, always excepting the abodes of those suffering martyrs the Terra Santa monks.*

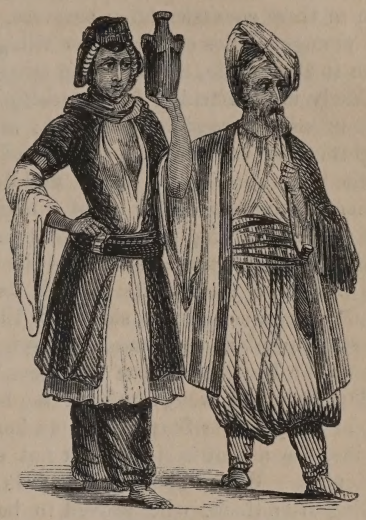
CHAPTER XXX.

Nablous.—The Samaritans. Sebaste. Plain of Jezreel. Soil and Husbandry of Palestine.

Nablous is the Arabic form of the Greek Neapolis, and is one of the few instances in which the names imposed by foreign conquerors have superseded the ancient nomenclature. The inhabitants of this mountain district exhibit many physical and moral traits distinguishing them from the other Syrian tribes. They bear the impress of their Greek ancestry; but Perrier remarks that to the turbulence and other bad qualities inherited from them, the Nablousians superadd the vices of the Arabs. The following anecdote illustrates their fierce party spirit. In 1834, some children of the village of Beit-

* Stephens. Robinson. Olin. Monro.

el-Ma amused themselves with gathering anemonies, and plucking and scattering the bright leaves of the flowers. As the relations of these children were known to be of the Yesmeni faction, a mob of Nablousians of the Kess party immediately assembled in arms, vowing vengeance for this so called insult to their adopted colour and emblem. Several villages were sacked, and a hundred and thirty individuals lost their lives in consequence of this frivolous quarrel.



Inhabitants of Nablous.

The city of Nablous is long and narrow, stretching close along the N.E. base of Mount Gerizim. In the ruggedness and narrowness of its ways, it resembles Jerusalem and other Syrian towns, but there is a welcome appearance of bustle and life in its streets; the sound of the silk-wheel and loom is heard from many of its houses, mingling with that best of music in an Eastern climate, the rush of many streams, which afford a profuse supply of water to the inhabitants. The houses are high, and in general well-built, all of stone, with domes upon the roof as at Jerusalem. The valley itself, from the foot of Gerizim to that of Ebal, is here not more than some five hundred yards wide, extending from S.E. to N.W. The city lies directly upon a water summit in this valley; the waters on the eastern part flowing off east into the plain, and so to the Jordan: while the fine fountains on the western side send off a pretty brook down the valley N.W. to the Mediterranean.

Mounts Gerizim and Ebal rise in steep, rocky precipices, immediately from the valley on each side, to a height apparently of some eight hundred feet. The sides of both these mountains, as here seen, are equally naked and sterile; although some travellers have chosen to describe Gerizim as fertile, and to confine the sterility to Ebal. The only exception in favour of the former appears to be a small ravine coming down opposite the west end of the town, which, indeed, is full of fountains and trees; in other respects, both mountains, as here seen, are desolate, except that a few olive trees are scattered upon them. The side of the northern mountain, Ebal, along the foot, is full of ancient excavated sepulchres.

The two most interesting accounts given us by recent travellers of Mount Gerizim, are those of Dr. Robinson and Lord Francis Egerton. The latter, coming from Jerusalem, encamped in the valley beyond the further end of the town:—"The spot we selected," says his Lordship, "formed, in my opinion, the most agreeable halting-place in our travels—an olive grove on a slight eminence immediately over a delicious spring. We had the whole afternoon before us for the enjoyment of that sort of repose, which can only

be purchased by exercise in a hot sun, and richly we enjoyed it. The spring was enough frequented to make it interesting, from the specimens it afforded of the inhabitants, without being burthensome as a neighbour, which a fountain in these countries often becomes, particularly when much frequented by the younger ladies of a town or village. I never enjoyed pleasanter repose than in this cradle, of which the two sides were Mounts Ebal and Gerizim."

Early next morning his Lordship's party climbed the latter mountain. "It is easily accessible for horses; and one of the views of the town at the beginning of the ascent, forms one of the finest landscapes I have seen in Syria. A ruined tower of the middle ages is on the left of the foreground, which is otherwise made up of a mass of foliage, in which the deep green of the apricot and fig predominates. A single palm breaks this mass in the foreground, and others are seen in the distance, adding to the oriental effect of the picture of the city itself, with its terraced roofs, mosques, and cupolas. Mount Geirzim on one side and Ebal on the other, feathered with olive groves, complete the scene. In some of its features, Nablous struck me as not unlike Bagnères in the Pyrenees."

Dr. Robinson went by the ravine before-mentioned, under the guidance of one of the younger Samaritans, an honest, simple-minded man. Above the ravine, the ascent is steep; yet not so but that one might ride up without difficulty. When about two-thirds of the way up, they heard a woman calling after them, who proved to be the mother of the Samaritan guide. He was her only son, and had come away, it seems, without her knowledge; and she was now in the utmost terror at finding that he had gone off as a guide to Franks, to show them the holy mountain. She had immediately followed the party, and was now crying after them with all the strength of her lungs, forbidding him to proceed lest some evil should befal him. The young man went back to meet her, and tried to pacify her, but in vain; she insisted upon his returning home. This he was not inclined to do, though, he said, he could not disobey his mother, and so transgress the law of Moses. This touching trait gave the travellers a favourable idea of the morality of the Samaritans. After reasoning with her a long time without effect, he finally persuaded her to go with them. So she followed the strangers up the mountain; at first full of wrath, and keeping at a distance from them; yet, at last, she became quite reconciled and communicative.

Twenty minutes of ascent in the direction S. W. from the city leads the traveller to the top of Gerizim, a tract of high table land, stretching off far to the W. and S. W., and covered with rich herbage and wild flowers. Twenty minutes more towards the S. E. along a regular path upon the table land brings him to the holy place of the Samaritans, which is still at some distance from that shown as Joshua's altar. The ground here is rather depressed to a centre, so that a larger assemblage than the Samaritans can now muster, might conveniently witness the sacred rites as from a theatre. A few stones formed into an altar, and a paved trench to carry off the victim's blood, are all the tokens of the place and its purposes. A little further on the extreme and most elevated summit which overlooks the valley are some very extensive remains of a Roman fortress, with large tanks and much masonry of massive and regular construction.

Just under the walls of the castle, on the west side, are a few flat stones, of which it is difficult to say whether they were laid there by nature or by man. Under these are laid, as they allege, the twelve stones brought from Jordan by the Israelites; and there they will remain till the Muhdy (the Messiah) shall appear.

Beyond the castle, towards the south, is the alleged altar of Joshua, the holiest spot, where the Samaritan guide reverently takes off his shoes. It is the kibleh of that people. On whatever side of it they may be, they always turn their faces towards it in prayer; but when upon the spot itself it is lawful for them to pray in any direction. Round it are slight traces of former walls, possibly those of the ancient temple. The spot itself is a sort of table level with the surrounding ground, and at first sight appearing to be nothing more than the natural face of the rock from which the surface soil has been removed, and divided into compartments by natural accidents of fracture and fissure. Such Lord Francis Egerton at first considered it, but on closer inspection he was induced to adopt the opinion that it was artificial. "It slopes," his lordship says, "at an angle fully sufficient for the sacrificial purpose of allowing blood to drain off towards the cavernous mouth of a deep well. Of these wells there are several near, and in two, at least, of them I thought I perceived that the stones of the orifice had been arranged artificially, and if so, with consummate skill, and to be, in fact, specimens of that kind of architecture best known by the term of cyclopean,—stones, namely, unhewn, but fitted to one another with a felicity, which on a small scale, is often exhibited by the dyke-builders of Scotland. Now, Joshua was directed to build his altar of whole stones, untouched by iron tool; and, on looking at the altar itself, and comparing it with the wells in the neighbourhood, I was much inclined to the opinion, that all were of the same construction, and of one which would answer this description."

Near the same place the Samaritans show an altar as that on which Abraham was commanded to offer up Isaac; and further south, and, indeed, all round upon this eminence, are extensive foundations, apparently of dwellings, as if the ruins of a former city.

In the S.W. part of Nablous is the quarter occupied by the remnant of the Samaritans, rising somewhat upon the acclivity of Gerizim. The houses are well built and have the appearance of comfort. One of this little community is in affluent circumstances, having formerly been for a long while chief secretary of the Mutsellim of Nablous, and one of the most important and powerful men in the province: the rest are not remarkable either for wealth or poverty. Their physiognomy is not Jewish, nor does it appear to possess any peculiar character, distinct from that of other natives of the country.

No nation perhaps ever committed so many crimes, or endured so many reverses and persecutions in defence of its religion and its ancestral usages, as the Samaritans: and though there be little to commend in their annals, who can contemplate unmoved the lingering death of an ancient people, now dwindled to a mere handful, but still clinging with a love stronger than death, to the memory and laws of their fathers? In the month of April, 1840, one hundred and fifty-three individuals, forming three-and-twenty families, were all that were left of them to hope and struggle on in vain. "I was

presented," says Mr. Farren, late British Consul-General in Syria, "in acknowledgment of some little service I rendered them with a copy of a letter addressed to them about two hundred years ago from a body of Samaritans in India (of whom they have no other trace) beseeching to know the fate of their brethren in Samaria; and when at Sychem and passing at sunset near their tombs, which lay upon a sterile bank within a wild recess at the foot of Gerizim, two Samaritan women, who were seated there and seemed mournfully to be numbering the graves into which the remnant of their ancient race was fast declining, broke from their silence as I approached, and in accents of deep feeling, implored me, if I knew where any of their people were now scattered to tell them, that their few remaining brethren, who still dwelt in the land of their forefathers, besought them to return, and close the exhausted record of their fate with kindred sympathies and rites."

Much curiosity has existed among the learned in Europe with regard to this singular people, and several most eminent men of their day, from Scaliger down to De Sacy, have had correspondence with them but without any satisfactory result. The descendants of the Israelites who remained and were not carried into captivity, on the rebuilding of the second temple were denied the privilege of sharing the labour and expense of its reconstruction at Jerusalem; and in mortification and revenge they built a temple on Mount Gerizim with the permission of Alexander the Great; and ever since a deadly hatred has existed between their descendants the Samaritans and the Jews. Gibbon, speaking of them in the time of Justinian, says, "The Samaritans of Palestine were a motley race, an ambiguous sect, rejected as Jews by the Pagans, by the Jews as schismatics, and by the Christians as idolaters. The abomination of the cross had been already planted on their holy Mount of Gerizim, but the persecution of Justinian offered only the alternative of baptism or rebellion. They chose the latter; under the standard of a desperate leader they rose in arms and retaliated their wrongs on the lives, the property, and the temples of a defenceless people. The Samaritans were finally subdued by the regular forces of the East; 20,000 were slain, 20,000 were sold by the Arabs to the infidels of Persia and India, and the remains of that unhappy nation atoned for the crime of treason by the sin of hypocrisy." They pretended to embrace christianity in the year 551, as the only means of recovering a few trifling privileges. Soon after that period they disappear from the historian's view; crushed down without the power of resistance under the heavy yoke of the Muslims, their numbers have ever since continued to decrease.

The Syrians tell many marvellous tales about the isolated and mysterious Samaritans: they assert that the number of heads of families among them is invariably forty, and can neither augment nor diminish, being irrevocably fixed by the demons, who are the protectors of the race. Setting aside all such fables, the following is an abstract of what appears best authenticated respecting this people.

They intermarry only with each other, never stray beyond their mountain, and hold no familiar intercourse with their neighbours of a different creed. Cut off from the whole world, ages pass over their heads, leaving them unchanged in all but numbers.

Their synagogue is a small plain arched room, with a curtained recess on the left hand as you enter, wherein they keep their manuscripts, of which they profess to have about a hundred: one of these, a copy of the Pentateuch, they allege to be 3460 years old, having been transcribed by Abishua, the son of Phineas, and great-grandson of Aaron. They demand payment beforehand for showing this, and then produce an old roll, which, however, is not the right one. If the traveller is skilled enough in such matters to detect the fraud, the priest and his hopeful flock only laugh and bring out the other. "This," says Dr. Robinson, "was certainly very much worn, and somewhat tattered with much kissing, and here and there patched with shreds of parchment; but the handwriting appeared to me very similar to the former, and the vellum seemed, in like manner, not ancient." They regard the genuine manuscript, whatever that may be, as a palladium with which are bound up the lives and destinies of the Samaritans; but they are possessed, it is said, with a sad foreboding, that the precious deposit will one day be wrested from them, and then will the days of the last of their race be numbered. According to their account, their two families of priests are still of the stock of Aaron. Until recently these families had kept their blood pure from all alien mixture; but in consequence of their continual diminution, the males among them, now five in number, have been obliged to take wives from other houses. The place where they sacrifice [on ordinary occasions?] is an altar of dry stone, erected behind their village, on an artificial mound, which serves them as a representative of the famous Mount Gerizim. They keep the passover in the manner of the ancient Hebrews.

In childbirth the Samaritan woman remains shut up in her house for forty days, and no one is allowed to see her but the midwife or the nurse. Were any one else, even her husband, to see her during that time, the whole house would be rendered unclean, and it would be necessary to burn every article in it that was incapable of being purified by fire or by running water. Her chamber is closely shut, and talismans are hung on the door to drive away the demon *Leilat*, a formidable being, ever on the watch to steal into the lying-in chamber, and cast a malignant spell upon the mother and her child. Above the talismans the name of *Leilat* is inscribed in large red letters, with an imprecation against the fiend; for of all magic charms his own name is thought most potent to repel him. On the fortieth day the woman quits her prison, Leilat no longer having any power to molest her; but it is not till twelve days after this that she performs her solemn ablutions, and a festival is held in the house to celebrate her re-admission into the family circle.

Like the Jews, the Samaritans carefully avoid all contact with a dead body or with a tomb, lest they should be rendered unclean: they wash their whole bodies and change their raiment before presenting themselves at the altar for prayer or sacrifice.

The following is their own tradition touching their origin: it is not, perhaps, perfectly in accordance with history:—

"When Salmanazar, king of Assyria, invaded Judea, after having conquered the kingdom of Israel, he carried away the whole population of Samaria into slavery in the land of Maden and Phares; but he left in their places a certain number of Assyrian families to till the ground and transmit

the revenues of the country to Assyria. These families chose for their residence the mountain still called Samir to this day; hence they took the name of Samaritans. For a long while they retained their own religion; but soon after the return of the Jews from captivity, they intermarried with the Hebrew families, whose religion they gradually adopted, at the same time preserving some of the rites of their own worship. The Jews, to avoid being confounded with the Samaritans, invented, under Esdras, new Hebrew characters, called *Sires*, and copied out their books in the new writing, rejecting the old one as rendered impure by the Chaldeans. Now the ancient mode of writing, and the primitive Hebrew characters, are at present in the hands of the Samaritans, as well as the original books which were contemned by the Jews after the invention of the new characters."

Some members of this little community were accused before the atrocious Djezzar, pasha of Acre, of having blasphemed the Mohammedan faith, by declaring that they alone, as possessing the true ancient religion of God, were entitled to Paradise. Djezzar instantly summoned the chief men of the Samaritans, who entered his presence with dismay. Leaning on his hatchet and surrounded with his cut-throats and executioners, he stared for a long while with the aspect of a tiger on the Samaritans, whose terrors he beheld with delight. "Filthy miscreants!" he cried at last in a voice of thunder, "what is the exact number of your people?" "A hundred and sixty," they replied, half-dead with fear. "A hundred and sixty! and Paradise is for you alone! Well, then, sons of dogs, leave the earth to those against whom Paradise is barred, and go straight to heaven." Thereupon the pasha made a fatal gesture with his right hand, and the wretched men were hurried out for execution. But presently Djezzar appeared to change his mind. "Send those dogs back to their dens," he said; "and if a single one of them ever ventures to show himself beyond them, let him be killed like an unclean beast." He then by way of commuting their punishment increased the taxes paid by the Samaritans six-fold, and saddled them with the cost of constructing and maintaining a fountain at *Kefr Nuohr*, two leagues from Saffad, that, as he said, they might do some good in this world to those who were to be deprived of paradise in the next. The Samaritans returned home, rejoiced at having got off so well from this interview with the ferocious pasha, who fortunately for them happened on that day to be in unusually good humour. "Ever since that day," say the oldest Samaritans, "none of us have gone down into the plain, and we die without ever quitting the walls of our quarters."

Djezzar Pasha has been many years dead, but the lesson still works, and the Samaritans keep close to home, dreading to expose themselves to the outrages of the rude Nablousian mountaineers.*

Mr. Stephens spent a long evening in a Samaritan house; he had an interesting conversation with the owner and his brother, and testifies to the kindness, sincerity, and honesty of his entertainers.

The brother was particularly fond of talking about his people. "He was very old, and the most deformed man I ever saw who lived to attain a great

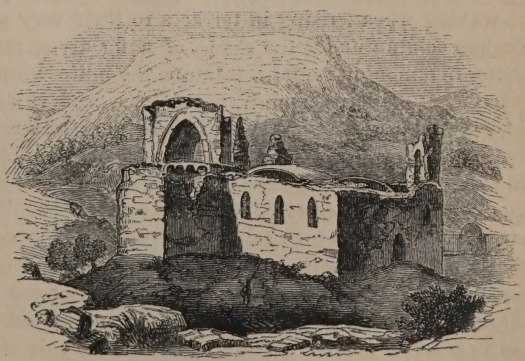
* Perrier.

age. His legs were long, and all his limbs were those of a tall man, but he was so humpbacked that in sitting he rested on his hump. He asked me many questions about the Samaritans in England, (of America he had no knowledge), and seemed determined to believe that there were many in that country, and told me that I might say to them, wherever I found them, that there they believed in one omnipotent and eternal God, the five books of Moses, and a future Messiah, and looked for the day of the Messiah's coming as near at hand; that they practised circumcision, went three times a year up to Mount Gerizim, 'the everlasting mountain,' to worship and offer sacrifice, and once a year pitched their tents and left their virgins alone on the mount for seven days, expecting that one of them would conceive and bring forth a son, who should be the Messiah; that they allowed two wives, and in case of barrenness, four; that the women were not permitted to enter the synagogue, except once a year during fast, but on no account were they permitted to touch the sacred scroll; and that, although the Jews and Samaritans had dealings on the market-place, &c., they hated each other now as much as their fathers did before them.

"I asked him about Jacob's well: he said he knew the place, and that he knew our Saviour, or Jesus Christ, as he familiarly called him, very well; he was Joseph the carpenter's son, of Nazareth; but that the story which the Christians had about the woman at the well was all a fiction; that Christ did not convert her, but that, on the contrary, she laughed at him, and even refused to give him water to drink."

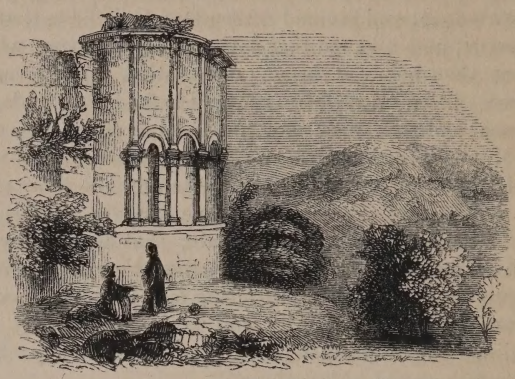
At about eight in the morning we left Nablous, and for more than an hour we followed the course of the beautiful stream winding and murmuring through the centre of the valley. Nothing could be more charmingly picturesque than the little mills on its banks; low, completely embosomed among trees, with their roofs covered with grass; and sometimes the agreeable sound of a waterfall, was the first intimation we had of their presence.

Leaving the valley, we turned up to the right, and crossing among the mountains, in two hours came in sight of the ruins of Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, standing on a singularly bold and insulated mountain crowned with ruins. The most conspicuous of these is the church dedicated to St. John the Baptist, built over the spot where a tradition of long standing has fixed the place of his burial, if not of his martyrdom. The walls are still entire to a considerable height and inclose a large space in which are now a mosque and a small building over the tomb. Yet Josephus relates expressly that John was beheaded in the castle of Machaerus,



Church of St. John, Sebaste.

on the east of the Dead Sea; and it is hardly probable that his disciples who "came and took up the body and buried it," (Matt. xiv. 12), first transported it all the way to Samaria. The eastern end of the church is rounded in the common Greek style, and resting as it does upon a precipitous elevation of nearly one hundred feet, it is a noble and very striking monument. Common tradition, as in so many other cases, falsely ascribes this magnificent church to Helena; but the style of the architecture necessarily limits its antiquity to the period of the crusades; though it is not improbable that a portion of the eastern end may be of earlier date.



Church of St. John, Sebaste, eastern end.

Sebustieh is the Arabic form of Sebaste, another foreign Greek appellation, which, since the days of Herod, has continued to usurp the place of the earlier name, Samaria. The neighbourhood is quite a forest of truncated columns, bearing witness to Herod's magnificence; and it would be difficult to find in all Palestine a situation to equal in strength, fertility and beauty combined, this site of the later capital of the Ten Tribes. In all these particulars it has greatly the advantage over Jerusalem. The whole hill consists of fertile cultivated soil; on the summit is a broad level, apparently artificial, from which a view is obtained, extensive and beautiful almost beyond comparison. All around was a noble valley, watered by murmuring streams, and covered by a rich carpet of grass sprinkled with wild flowers of every hue; and beyond, stretched like an open book before me, a boundary of fruitful mountains, with their deep green ravines, and the fig, vine, olive, and waving wheat, rising in terraces to their very summits. I sat down on a broken column under the shade of a fig tree; and near me a fellah was turning his plough round a column, the mute witness, perhaps, of the revels of Herod, "his lords, and high captains, and chief estates of Galilee." I asked the man what were the ruins we saw; and while his oxen were quietly cropping the grass that grew among the fragments of the marble floor, he told me they were the palace of a king—he believed of the Christians. What a comment on the vanity of worldly greatness! While pilgrims from every quarter of the world turn aside from their path to do homage in the supposed prison of Herod's victim, this Arab, who was driving his plough among the columns of his palace, knew not the proud monarch's name.

Descending from the ruined city we resumed our journey, and came in less than an hour to Burka, a large village on the side of the northern ridge, overlooking the whole basin of Sebastieh. Riding along through a succession of beautiful valleys, nearly all the way close to the banks of a running stream, with numerous villages in sight, we came to Sanûr, seated on an insulated

hill, commanding an extensive view of the country, and once a strongly fortified place, but now totally demolished. The notorious Jezzar, with five thousand men, once ineffectually besieged the sheikh of this place for two months in his stronghold. But more than thirty years afterwards was again invested by the late Abdallah Pasha of Acre, assisted by the troops of the Emir Beshir. It was taken after a siege of three or four months; the insurgent inhabitants were put to the sword, and their houses burnt and razed to the ground. The plain on the east of Sanûr is a beautiful tract, oval or nearly round in form, three or four miles in diameter, and surrounded by low picturesque hills. Having no issue for its waters, this plain becomes a lake in the wet season, whence it has received the name of Merj-el-Ghuruk, or Drowned Meadow.

Passing Jerba on our left and Kufeir on our right, we ascended a slight rocky eminence, and reaching its top were suddenly gratified with a wide and glorious view extending across the lower hills to the great plain of Esdraelon and the mountains of Nazareth beyond. The impression at first almost overpowered me. Just below us, on the left, was a lovely little basin or plain, a recess shut in among the mountains, and separated on the north from the great plain only by a slight ridge. I looked eagerly for the round summit of Tabor, but it was not visible; the mountain of Duhy, the Little Hermon, rose in desert nakedness between, and shut out Tabor wholly from the view. Further west the mountains rose boldly along the north side of the great plain, and the Mount of Precipitation was conspicuous, bearing N. by E.

We had now a considerable descent on the other side of the ridge; we soon passed Kubatieh, a large village in the midst of very extensive and beautiful olive groves, and at about six o'clock we had left the beautiful country of Samaria, and were entering the little town of Jenin, standing on the borders of Galilee, at the commencement of the great plain of Jezreel. This town, the Ginaea of Josephus, has usually passed for the site of ancient Jezreel, an error corrected by Dr. Robinson, who has identified the latter with Zerin, a small village about seven miles further north.

Encampment on the Plain of Jezreel.

Early in the morning we left Jenin, by a road leading a little north of east to Beisân, the Beth-shan of Scripture, where the Philistines fastened the bodies of Saul and his three sons to the walls after they had fallen in Mount Gilboa. That mountain we crossed on our way, and found it to be a low range crossing the plain of Jezreel from N. W. to S. E. A proof of its

identity is preserved in the name of a village, Jelbôn, through which we passed: the inhabitants of Jenin now call the range Jebel Fukua, from the adjacent village; but it is hardly probable that others give it this appellation.

Beyond the hills we * fell in with Lord Alvanley's encampment, and found him and his companion, Mr. St. Leger, safely returned from their expedition to Djerash, of which they spoke with much delight. Their Bedouin escort was still with them, and on our arrival jumped into their saddles to exhibit their horsemanship. These people were of the purest desert breed, and a more magnificent specimen of the race of Ishmael I can hardly imagine. They had been brought across Jordan with some trouble by the agency of Mr. Young for Lord Alvanley's journey. Most of them appeared of fully middle age, tall, and blackened almost to a Nubian tint. The youngest and tallest appeared not more than twenty, and reminded me strongly of Lord A. Pt., being just what his lordship might become in appearance after a few months of the fare and training of the desert. In riding I need not say they were centaurs. The Bedouin dress, exquisitely graceful and picturesque as it is, appears to a stranger, and would probably be found by one, inconvenient for riding. The loose robe flying to the wind, and the head-dress, a thick and gaudy handkerchief, fastened by a cincture of camel's hair, appear as if any exertion would throw them off from the wearer. It is a dress, however, which leaves every joint and muscle free. I have no doubt that if an Arab were to be forced into a Melton costume and placed on an English saddle he would fall off at the first fence. After the evolution was over, I was employed in sketching, when I heard the word "backsheesh" gently murmured in my ear, and was tapped on the shoulder by Lord Ad. The state of my pocket luckily enabled me to respond to his lordship's suggestion. I am grieved to say that before parting with his employers this young nobleman was guilty of an act of indiscretion which may serve as a warning to travellers. The party had been hired on liberal terms, and the sum was duly paid over to the elderly sheikh who commanded, and who was uncle to Lord Ad. and conspicuous for a pair of brass-barrelled Birmingham pistols. Lord Ad. it appears was discontented with his share, and ended a hot discussion with the sheikh by rushing into Lord Alvanley's servants' tent, breaking divers articles of earthenware with his lance, snatching up Lord Alvanley's double-barrelled fowling-piece, and riding off with it desertward. Confusion like that of the camp of Agramant ensued, Lord Alvanley's servants promptly seized the person of the sheikh and the horses of the others. The old man was much alarmed, as he knew that Nablous was not a place to play tricks in, and ended by obtaining permission to mount and pursue the offender. This, being probably the best-mounted of the party, he accomplished in good style, firing two shots at his nephew at speed; which failing, he adopted the process attributed to Doctor Johnson in argument, by knocking him off his horse with the butt of his gun, and brought back the double barrel in safety. There is a cunning sparkle in the lighted charcoal of an Arab eye, which would prevent a physiognomist from trusting them in any matter in

* Lord Francis Egerton.

which the inviolable usages of their race do not afford security for their good behaviour; and I suspect that even these are not to be relied on, where their edges are worn by any neighbourhood or intercourse with civilisation. In this case, however, I believe the action was not premeditated or assisted by the others. The vengeance on the pottery was without excuse; but the gun was too much for a young Achilles to resist, and a Ulysses would certainly have put it out of his way.

A good deal of the plain of Jezreel is under cultivation. We found harvest going on in many places. The grain, as soon as cut, is brought in small sheaves to the threshing floors on the backs of asses, or sometimes of camels. The little donkeys are so often covered with their load of grain, as to be themselves hardly visible; one sees only a mass of sheaves moving along as if of its own accord. A level spot is selected for the threshing floors, which are then constructed near each other, of a circular form, perhaps fifty feet in diameter, merely by beating down the earth hard. Upon these circles the sheaves are spread out very thickly; and the grain is trodden out by animals, or a coarse sledge is driven over it, the under surface of which is set with sharp flint-stones, that force out the grain, and cut up the straw into chaff. The whole process is exceedingly wasteful, from the transportation on the backs of animals to the treading out upon the bare ground. But what is there that is not wasted in this richly-gifted but unhappy land? Oppression, rapine, and misrule have extended their accursed influence to the very soul of Syria; large tracts of rich land are left unproductive; others have been suffered to become parched and hungry deserts; and the mischief would be still greater than it is, were not man's neglect counteracted by the assiduous labours of even so insignificant a creature as the dung beetle.

Threshing Corn.

In crossing the Bekaa, Lord Francis Egerton tells us—"My attention was diverted from the scenery of our route to an object in motion on the ground. I found it to be a ball of the size of a large egg, apparently composed of dried horse dung, and the moving power a round squat beetle, about a fourth of the size of the mass he was urging. I never saw a finer or more attractive exhibition of spirit, perseverance, and muscular power. There was something irresistibly droll in the attitude in which the little animal's strength was applied to its undertaking; for it usually stood on its head, and kicked its burthen back and upwards with an elastic exertion of its hind legs. The soil was not favourable to the operation; for the surface was strewed with loose stones, from which the ball frequently rolled back on its unwearied and undaunted mover. No

obstacle could depress its spirit: sometimes by a curious manœuvre it contrived to cling to the mass which it had set in motion, and roll head over heels along with it. Its speed was such on the average, that I really believe I could have calculated the time in which it might have reached Damascus. It was a glorious example for a younger brother starting in life, an East India cadet or a Scotch emigrant. It delayed my journey, and would have detained a White of Selborne for hours."

Good speed to all such gallant, sturdy, labourers! We may be sure that the benefits arising from their exertions are not confined to themselves alone. It is part of the wondrous economy of nature, to make the instincts she bestows on her creatures subserve an infinity of *secondary* purposes, if we may so speak in accordance with our own limited intelligence. This principle we find elucidated as regards the case before us in a work recently published.* In passing through the desert from Egypt, the author was surprised to see the fresh verdure, in many instances, of tall grassy bushes, to which the bending of the camel's head not unfrequently directed his attention; and where there was no water near, it was sometime before he could satisfy himself as to the cause of the verdure. Little holes were seen around the bushes, but their cause or purpose was alike unknown. At Kan Younes, the seeming mystery was solved. Multitudes of beetles (the scarabeus of the Egyptians) were seen rolling the round pieces of camels' dung, and other deposits, speedily formed by them into a similar shape and size, to suitable spots where the soil was bare, or around the roots of bushes; there they formed their holes with the mathematical certainty of instinct, into which the balls, by a slight motion were rolled down—these forming beds of incubation for the "sharn-bred beetle." These little animals, which abound in myriads, at once preserve the purity of the air, and increase the fertility of the soil, being often the only busy cultivators where man is idle; and thus the wonder is diminished that the scarabeus was, in ancient times, worshipped by the Egyptians.

Having now traversed the Holy Land nearly in its length and breadth, I can form my own judgment of its soil, a subject on which, above all others connected with the country, I had found my previous information most defective. The statements which I had seen were contradictory and irreconcilable. My own experience leads me to regard it as quite certain that some portions of Palestine, once fertile, are now irreclaimable. The entire destruction of the wood that formerly covered the mountains, and the utter neglect of the terraces which supported the soil on steep declivities, have allowed the rains to lay bare many tracts of rock formerly clothed with vineyards and corn-fields. It is likely, too, that the disappearance of trees from the higher grounds, where they invited and arrested the passing clouds, may have diminished the quantity of rain, and so have exposed the whole country, in a greater degree, to the evils of drought, and doomed some particular tracts to absolute sterility. Except these, I do not recognise any permanent and invincible causes of barrenness, or any physical obstacles in the way of restoring this fine country to its pristine fertility. The soil of the whole country has certainly deteriorated under bad husbandry and the entire neglect

* Rev. Dr. Keith: The Land of Israel according to the Covenant. 1843.

of the means of improvement: but a small degree of skill and industry would be sufficient to reclaim it, as must be evident to every traveller who has observed the vineyards near Hebron and Bethlehem, and the gardens of Nablous. Excepting the tracts about the Dead Sea, which must always have been barren, the worst part of Palestine is now on the "hill country" of Judah; yet this was precisely adapted in soil and climate to the growth of those important staples, the grape, the fig, and the olive, and they made it perhaps the most wealthy and populous part of the land. The innumerable remains of terraces and cisterns, and the ruins of large towns and villages thickly scattered over this romantic region, would clearly demonstrate even if both sacred and profane history were silent on the subject, that it has been densely peopled and highly cultivated. Now by far the largest portion of this mountain tract is susceptible of being fully restored to its ancient fertility. The valleys produce wheat very well at present, and the tops of the mountains, though utterly neglected, are covered with fine pasturage.

Any practicable attempt to restore Palestine to its former prosperity must be based on the revival of agriculture. There is now really no basis for any extension of commerce, and a colony of tradesmen, such for instance as the return of the Jews would give the country, would only increase its poverty and wretchedness. The Duke of Ragusa advised Mohammed Ali to make Palestine and Syria an immense sheep-walk, and this should probably be the first object of a colony here. Large additional tracts might also be tilled in wheat, with no greater labour of preparation and improvement than that of turning up the soil with the plough. The product of cotton and tobacco, which are already articles of export, might be doubled or trebled at once. Plantations of vine, olive, fig, and other fruit-bearing trees, would require more time and return slower profits; but they would be indispensable to the complete renovation of the country and the full development of its resources.

It fills me* with surprise to see some of the best men of England labouring to promote the colonisation of Jews in Palestine, and that under existing governments. The Jews are precisely the last people on earth fitted for such an enterprise, as they are a nation of traffickers, and know nothing of agriculture. It would be worth while also for the Christian philanthropist to inquire whether the probabilities in favour of their conversion to Christianity would be multiplied by this restoration to their father-land, where a thousand circumstances would perpetually remind them of the glorious days of their nation and its religion. And surely the form of Christianity, which a Jew may behold in Jerusalem, is not such as can ever win him to forsake the cherished faith of his fathers.

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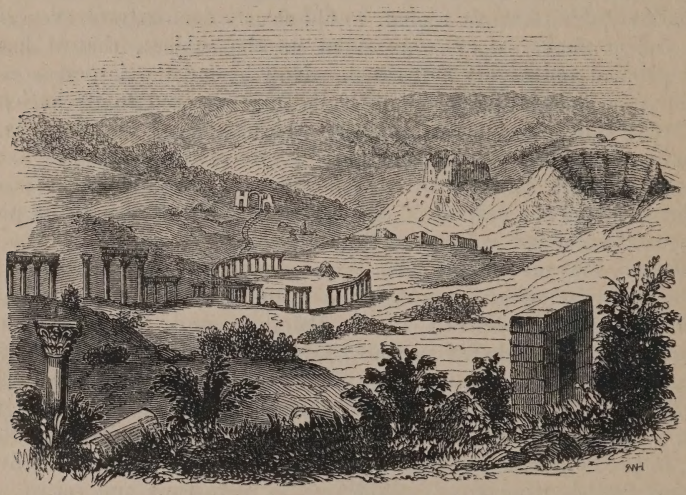
* Dr. Olin.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Countries East of the Jordan.

The countries between the Jordan and the Desert were those first conquered by the Israelites before the subjugation of the Land of Canaan, and



Jerash. General View.

were allotted to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. They are comparatively little known to Europeans, having been rarely visited by travellers, until the discoveries made by Seetzen of the ruins of Jerash and of Ammān (Philadelphia) in the ancient Decapolis. It is true, that, in point of historical interest, they are inferior to the countries west of the Jordan; but, on the other hand, they are pre-eminent for the multiplicity and splendour of their ancient remains.

Ancient Tomb at Ammān.

At Oom Keis, for instance—the ancient name of which in all probability

was Gadara—besides the foundations of a whole line of houses, there are two theatres, on the north and west sides of the town, the former quite destroyed, but the latter in very tolerable preservation, and very handsome; near it the ancient pavement, with wheel-tracks of carriages, is still visible. There are broken columns, capitals, and sarcophagi in great numbers, but by far the most interesting antiquities in Oom Keis are the tombs on the east of the town. They are almost all inhabited, and the massive stone doors that originally closed them, still move on their hinges, and open or shut at the option of the present owners. These doors are usually five or six inches thick. The best specimen seen by Lord Lindsay was beautifully carved in four deep pannels, with a pseudo-knocker; a wreath between two roses was sculptured on the lintel, and the sarcophagus still retained its place within. He saw numbers of stone doors afterwards in the Haouran, all the Roman houses there having been originally furnished with them, but nowhere any so handsome as those of the sepulchres of Oom Keis. Over one of them was a Greek inscription, signifying it to be the tomb of Gaius Annius Gaaniph, a curious mixture of Hebrew and profane names.

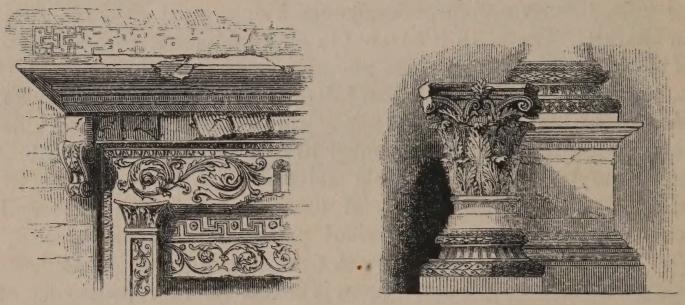
The Haouran, which may be considered the granary of Damascus, is an immense plain, described by Lord Lindsay as sometimes undulating, sometimes flat as a pan-cake,—with here and there (to use another culinary simile) low, rounded hills, like dumplings, conspicuous from a great distance, and excellent landmarks. The plain is covered in every direction with Roman towns, built of black basalt, some of them mere heaps of rubbish, others still almost perfect, the Arab *belladeen* (villagers) dwelling under the same stone roofs, and entering by the same stone doors as the old Romans; *stone* doors and *stone* roofs owing to the want of timber in the Haouran, which obliged the colonists to employ the more durable material. The doors are generally plain thick slabs, fixed into their sockets at the time the houses were built; the roofs are constructed on a very curious principle; a handsome arch, two or three feet in breadth, springing at once from the ground, is thrown across the middle of every large room; upon it is laid the roof consisting of stone slabs, one foot wide, two inches thick, and nearly half as long as the room: one end of the slabs rests on short projecting stones laid like a cornice along the top of the walls, and the other on the top of the arch. The best specimens of these houses are to seen at Ezra, one of the most interesting towns in Auranitis, and one of the very few of which we know the ancient name, Zarava. The town is of great extent, the houses well preserved, and Lord Lindsay walked through whole streets of them, seemingly in good repair, but almost all untenanted. He took up his residence in one of them he found unoccupied, and which was quite perfect except two fractures in the roof. What strange dreams he must have had!

His lordship describes the Roman mansion at Nedjraun, mentioned by Bankes in his letter to Buckingham. It had evidently belonged to one of the chief men of the place; its plain is seen at a glance, though modern buildings have intruded themselves into its spacious courts, the front gate of which has disappeared.

The court was probably nearly square: the house-door, nearly buried, occupies the centre of the front; above it, with a slit intervening, there is a

square window ; and there are two other windows on each side. Beyond these are two other doors, each of which opens on a moderately-sized apartment, lighted by windows from without. The entrance hall, eleven paces wide, by about eight and a half deep, and spanned by a beautiful arch, communicated, till the door was walled up, with the chamber to the left of the hall, which is now entered from the court. From the chamber to the right of the hall, a stone staircase ascended to the upper story of the mansion. Externally, a plain moulding marks the separation of the stones. The upper rooms are small, very numerous, and still inhabited. Nothing could exceed the courtesy of the owners in showing the travellers their dwellings, and allowing them to pry wherever they liked. The upper story recedes the depth of the hall, leaving a small terrace, on which the doors of the several apartments open. The wings are also full of rooms ; the ground-floor of that to the right is in great part occupied by a beautiful stable, with mangers of stone ; it is seven paces long, by nine deep, and spanned from right to left by a beautiful arch. The Arabs stable their steeds this very day where the old Romans did. The whole mansion is extremely well built, of hewn stones, plain and substantial, and all the rooms are entire.

Most of the chief towns of Auranitis exhibit traces of the architectural



Kenuawat. Architectural Details.

magnificence Rome so freely lavished on her remotest colonies ; but what is still more striking here, is the consideration evinced, and the pains taken even during the last ages of her decadence to promote the real welfare and comfort of her people. There is scarcely a village without its tank, and its bridge ; plain solid structures, so substantially built, that they are still almost invariably as good as new.

The view over the Haouran is at all times striking ; at sunset, especially from an elevation, extremely beautiful. Gebel Sheikh or Hermon, the last mountain in the chain of Antilebanon, is always visible to the N.W. Gebel Haouran, a range of hills of which the Kelb Haouran is the most prominent, running N.W. and S.E., limits the view to the east ; but to the south-east it is boundless. The soil is excellent ; numerous corn fields surround every village, while other districts serve merely for pasturage, and are grazed by the flocks of the Bedouins who visit the Haouran in swarms every spring.

E.N.E. of Gebel Haouran lies a very singular region called the Szaffa : it

is a stony district, much resembling the Ledja, with this difference, that the rocks with which it is covered are considerably larger, although the whole may be said to be even ground. It is two or three days in circumference, and is the place of refuge of the Arabs who fly from the Pasha's troops or from their enemies in the desert. The Szaffa has no springs; the rain water is collected in cisterns. The only entrance is through a narrow pass called Bab-el-Szaffa, a cleft between high perpendicular rocks, not more than two yards in breadth, which none ever dared to enter as an enemy. If a tribe of Arabs intend to remain a whole year in the Szaffa, they sow wheat and barley on the spots fit for cultivation on its precincts. On its east limits are three ruined villages. On its western side this district is called El-Harra, a term applied by the Arabs to all tracts which are covered with small stones, being derived from Harr, i.e., heat (reflected from the ground).

Burckhardt computed the population of the Haouran, exclusive of the Arabs who frequent the plain, the mountain (Jebel Haouran) and the Ledja, at about fifty or sixty thousand, of whom six or seven thousand were Druses, and three thousand Christians. "The Turks and Christians," he says, "have exactly the same mode of life; but the Druses are distinguished from them in many respects. The two former very nearly resemble the Arabs in their customs and manners, and the ordinary dress is precisely that of the latter race; a coarse white cotton stuff forms their kombaz or gown, the keffie round the head is tied with a rope of camel's hair, they wear the abba over the shoulder, and have the breast and feet naked; they have also adopted for the greater part the Bedouin dialect, gestures and phraseology, according to which most articles of household furniture have names different from those in the towns; it requires little experience, however, to distinguish the adults of the two nations from one another. The Arabs are generally of short stature, with thin visage, scanty beard, and brilliant black eyes, while the Fellahs are taller and stouter, with a strong beard and a less piercing look; but the difference seems chiefly to arise from their modes of life, for the youth of both nations to the age of sixteen, have precisely the same appearance. The following particulars are extracted from Burckhardt's work:—

Among the Fellahs of the Haouran the richest lives like the poorest, and displays his superior wealth only on the arrival of strangers. The ancient buildings afford spacious and convenient dwellings to many of the modern inhabitants, and those who occupy them may have three or four rooms for each family: but in newly built villages the whole family, with all its household furniture, cooking utensils, and provision chests, is commonly huddled together in one apartment. Here also they keep their wheat and barley in reservoirs formed of clay called *kawara*, which are about five feet high and two feet in diameter. The chief articles of furniture are a hand mill, which is used in summer when there is no water in the wadys to drive the mills; some copper kettles, and a few mats: in the richer houses some woollen *lebaet* are met with, which are coarse woollen stuffs used for carpets, and in winter for horse cloths: real carpets or mattresses are seldom seen, unless it be upon the arrival of strangers of consequence. Each family has a large earthen jar of the manufacture of Rasheiat-el-Fukhar, which is filled every morning by the females from the birket or spring with water for the day's consumption.

In every house there is a room for the reception of strangers, called from this circumstance Medhafe: it is usually that in which the male part of the family sleeps; in the midst of it is a fire-place to boil coffee.

Hospitality to strangers is another characteristic common to the Bedouins and the people of Haouran. A traveller may alight at any house he pleases; a mat will be immediately spread for him, coffee made, and breakfast or dinner set before him. On entering a village it has often happened to me that several persons presented themselves, each begging that I would lodge at his house; and this hospitality is not confined to the traveller himself, his horse or his camel is also fed, the first with half or three-quarters of a *moud* * of barley, the second with straw. With this part of their hospitality, however, I had often reason to be dissatisfied, less than a moud being insufficient upon a journey for a horse which is fed only in the evening according to the custom of these countries. As it would be considered an affront to buy any corn, the horse must remain ill fed, unless the traveller has taken the precaution to carry a little barley in his saddle-bag to make up the deficiency in the host's allowance. On returning to Aaere to the house of the Sheikh after my tour through the Desert, one of my Druse guides insisted on taking my horse to his stables instead of the Sheikh's: when I was about to depart, the Druse brought my horse to the door, and when I complained that he had fallen off greatly in the few days I had remained in the village, the Sheikh said to me in the presence of several persons, "You are ignorant of the ways of this country; if you see that your host does not feed your horse, insist upon his giving him a moud of barley daily; he durst not refuse it." It is a point of honour with the host never to accept of the smallest return from a guest; I once only ventured to give a few piastres to the child of a very poor family at Zahouet by whom we had been most hospitably treated, and rode off without attending to the cries of the mother, who insisted upon my taking back the money.†

Besides the private habitations which offer to every traveller a secure night's shelter, there is in every village the *medhafe* of the Sheikh, where all strangers of decent appearance are received and entertained. It is the duty of the Sheikh to maintain this medhafe, which is like a tavern, with this difference, that the host himself pays the bill. The Sheikh has a public allowance to defray these expenses, &c., and hence a man of the Haouran intending to travel about for a fortnight never thinks of putting a single para in his pocket; he is sure of being everywhere well received, and of living better perhaps than at his own home. A man remarkable for hospitality and generosity enjoys the highest consideration among the Haouranites.

* The moud is about nineteen pounds English.

† So much self-denial must not be expected among the Bedouins, who, with all their hospitality, have an intense craving after lucre. They are inordinate beggars. Burckhardt having hurt one of his legs in travelling on foot, tore up his shirt to make a bandage, which he tied round the wounded limb. He came to a Bedouin encampment, where he was hospitably received, fed, and lodged. When he was going away he was followed by thirty or forty women of the camp, crying after him, and begging him to give them something. "What can I give you?" he said. "I have no money, nor anything more valuable than the coarse clothes you see on my back. I would give you these if I could live without them." "May your bounty be extolled, O sheikh!" replied the women: "give us the bandage off your leg." He did so.

The inhabitant of Haouran estimates his wealth by the number of *fedhans* or pairs of cows or oxen which he employs in the cultivation of his fields. If it is asked, whether such a one has piastres, (a common mode of speaking,) the answer is, "A great deal; he drives six pair of oxen;" a man with two or three is esteemed wealthy; and such a one has probably two camels, perhaps a mare, or at least a *godish* (a gelding), or a couple of asses; and forty or fifty sheep or goats.

The fertility of the soil in the Haouran depends entirely upon the water applied to it. In districts where there is plenty of water for irrigation, the peasants sow winter and summer seeds; but where they have to depend entirely upon the rainy season for a supply, nothing can be cultivated in summer. The peasants of the Haouran are extremely shy in speaking of the produce of their land, from an apprehension that the stranger's inquiries may lead to new extortions. I have reason to believe, however, that in middling years wheat yields 25 fold; in some parts of the Haouran this year (1812) the barley has yielded 50 fold, and even, in some instances, 80. A sheikh, who formerly inhabited the small village of Boreika, on the southern border of the Ledja, assured me that from twenty mouds of wheat-seed, he once obtained thirty *gharara*s or 120 fold. Fields watered by rain yield more in proportion to the seed sown, than those which are artificially watered; this is owing to the seed being sown thinner in the former. The Haouran crops are sometimes destroyed by mice, though not so frequently as in the neighbourhood of Homs and Hamah. Where abundance of water may be conducted into the fields from neighbouring springs, the soil is again sown, after the grain harvests, with vegetables, lentils, peas, sesamum, &c.

The Fellahs who own fedhans, often cultivate one another's fields in company: a Turk living in a Druse village, often wishes to have a Druse for his companion, to escape in some degree the vexations of the Druse sheikh. At the Druse sheikh's, black slaves are frequently met with; but the Turk and Christian proprietors cultivate their lands by hired native labourers. Sometimes the labourer contracts with a townsman, and receives from him oxen, ploughs, and seed. A labourer who has one fedhan, or two oxen under his charge, usually receives, at the time of sowing, one gharara of corn. After the harvest, he takes one-third of the produce of the field, but among the Druses only one-fourth. The master pays the tax called the miri to the government, and the labourer pays ten piastres annually. The rest of the agricultural population of the Haouran consists of those who subsist by daily labour. They in general earn their living very hardly. I once met with a young man who had served eight years for his food only; at the expiration of that period, he obtained in marriage the daughter of his master,* for whom he would otherwise have had to pay seven or eight hundred piastres. When I saw him he had been married three years, but he complained bitterly of his father-in-law, who continued to require of him the performance of the most servile offices, without paying him anything; and thus prevented him from setting up for himself and family.

Daughters are paid for according to the respectability of their father, sometimes as high as 1500 piastres, and this custom prevails among Christians,

* Is not this almost identically the story of the patriarch Jacob?

Turks, and Druses. If her family is rich, the girl is fitted out with clothes and a string of sequins, or of silver coin, to tie round her head; after which she is delivered to her husband. I had an opportunity of witnessing the espousal of two Christians at Aaere, in the house of a Christian. The bride was brought with her female friends and relations from her native village, one day's journey distant, with two camels, decorated with tassels, bells, &c., and was lodged with her relations in Aaere. They entered the village preceded by women beating the tambourine, and by the village youths firing off their muskets. Soon afterwards the bridegroom retired to the spring, which was in a field, ten minutes from the village, where he washed and dressed himself in new clothes. He then entered the village, mounted on a caparisoned horse, surrounded by young men, two of whom beat tambourines, and the others fired muskets. He alighted before the sheikh's house, and was carried for about a quarter of an hour by two men, on their arms, amidst continued singing and huzzaing. The sheikh then exclaimed, *Mebarek el Aris* (Blessed be the bridegroom!) which was repeated by all present; after which he was set down, and remained till sunset, exposed to the jests of his friends: after this he was carried to the church, where the Greek priest performed the marriage ceremony, and the young couple retired to their dwelling. The bridegroom's father had slaughtered several lambs and kids, a part of which was devoured by mid-day; but the best pieces were brought in three enormous dishes of bourgool to the sheikh's medhafe, two being for the mob, and the third for the sheikh and the principal men of the village. In the evening paras were collected by one of the bridegroom's friends, who sung verses in praise of all his acquaintance, every one of whom when named was expected to make a present.

The Druses are far the most superior race in the country; their sheikhs and elderly men are always well, often handsomely dressed, and their women neatness itself: the women of the Arabs seldom veil their faces; those of the Druses always: the latter are more sedulous to conceal their beautiful features from the gaze of men, the stern morality of their race forbidding the slightest indication of levity, however venial.* A fearful instance of the uncompromising severity with which the Druses visit female frailty is related by a recent author, to whom the deputy of a local governor told the tale in these terms:—

"I was asleep in bed, when, in the middle of the night, I heard a knock at the door of my room. 'Who's there?' said I: a voice answered, 'Nasreddin.' I opened the door, and in came a Druse with a sack on his shoulders. 'What brings you here at this untimely hour?' said I. 'My sister has had an intrigue, and I have killed her. There are her horn and other ornaments in the sack, and as I am afraid the governor will do something to me, I want your intercession!' 'Why here are two horns in the sack,' said I. 'I killed her mother too, for she knew of the intrigue.' 'There is no power but in God Almighty! If your sister was impure, was that a reason for killing your mother? But lie down and sleep.' In the morning I said to him, 'I suppose you were too uneasy to sleep.' 'By

* See *ante*, p. 149.

Allah, O my uncle,' (a usual phrase), 'so unhappy has dishonour made me, that for a year I have not slept soundly until last night.' I then went with him to the governor, and said, 'Will you give Nasreddin the handkerchief of amnesty?' The governor said to Nasreddin, 'Speak without fear.' Nasreddin recounted his story; and the governor said, 'La bas,' (no harm): on which he kissed the governor's hand and went away." *

The oppressions of the government on one side, and those of the Bedouins on the other, have reduced the Fellah of the Haouran to a state little better than that of the wandering Arab. Few individuals either among the Druses or Christians die in the same village in which they were born. Families are continually removing from one place to another; in the first year of their new settlement the sheikh acts with moderation towards them; but his vexations becoming in a few years unsupportable they fly to some other place where they have heard that their brethren are better treated, but they soon find that the same system prevails over the whole country. Sometimes it is not merely the pecuniary extortion, but the personal enmity of the sheikh, or of some of the head men of the village, which drives a family from their home, for they are always permitted to depart. This continual wandering is one of the principal reasons why no village in the Haouran has either orchard or fruit-trees, or gardens for the growth of vegetables. "Shall we sow for strangers?" was the answer of a Fellah, to whom I once spoke on the subject, and who by the word strangers meant both the succeeding inhabitants and the Arabs who visit the Haouran in the spring and summer.†

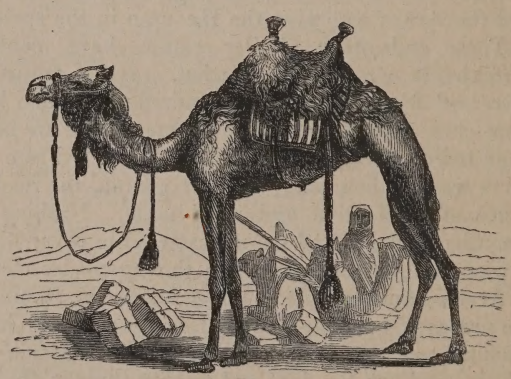
These and other similar causes have continued progressively since Burckhardt wrote. Population, says a recent traveller, seems to have decreased from thousands to hundreds, and from hundreds to decades: what were once cities of considerable magnitude are now wretched villages: and large towns have not a single inhabitant. From Nowa to Feik along the north western boundary of the Haouran, the road crosses a vast plain destitute of cultivation and inhabitants. Nothing is seen but the ruins of tenantless villages and towns scattered in every direction, with multitudes of hawks and herons occupying the spots deserted by man.‡ In the lists of Arabic names of places appended to Dr. Robinson's Researches, there are the names of one hundred and fifty-six places in ruins or deserted in the Haouran and the Ledja; eighty-one in Batania or Bashan; eighty-six in Ajlun; and one hundred and twenty-three in the Belka; in all four hundred and forty-six in the countries east of the Jordan. The whole of this region, once studded over with towns and cities, appears, both from ancient testimony and from its still existing ruins, to have been one of the most fertile and thickly-peopled countries on the face of the earth, and scarcely second perhaps in those respects to China itself.

What an agreeable and imposing prospect must the Haouran have presented to those who looked down on its rich productions, at the time the whole was brought under culture by the numerous and industrious Roman colonies that once inhabited these territories—its golden crops waving under the breezes that crossed its surface, like the smooth undulations of the wide ocean, and like it having no other boundary than the horizon itself. In many

* "The Modern Syrians." 1844. † Burckhardt. ‡ Elliot's Travels.

parts Burckhardt saw the most luxuriant wild herbage, through which his horse with difficulty made his way. Artificial meadows can hardly be finer than these desert fields; and this it is that renders the Haouran so favourite an abode with the Bedouins. The peasants of Syria are ignorant of the advantages of feeding their cattle with hay, and they allow their superfluous grass to wither away. One good thing at least results from this, the horses being fed on chopped straw and barley, are easily kept in good working condition, and the disease called "broken wind" is quite unknown among them. In Nedjd the people feed their horses regularly upon dates. At Derayeh, and in the country of El Hassn, dates are mixed with the birsim or dried clover, and given to them as food. Barley, however, is the most usual provender throughout all parts of Arabia. The wealthy inhabitants of Nejd frequently give flesh to their horses, raw as well as boiled, together with all the fragments of their own meals. Burckhardt knew a man at Hamah in Syria who assured him that he had often given his horses roasted meat before the commencement of a fatiguing journey, that they might be the better able to endure it. The same person also related to him that, fearing lest the governor of the town should take a liking to his favourite horse, he fed it for a fortnight exclusively on roasted pork, which excited the animal's spirit and mettle to such a height, that it became absolutely unmanageable, and could be no longer an object of desire to the governor.

Apropos of roast meat, Burckhardt says that the Egyptian horses, unlike those of the pure blood of Arabia, are often vicious, and that he has seen such animals cured of the habit of biting, by presenting to them while in the act of doing so, a leg of mutton just taken from the fire: the pain which a horse feels in biting through the hot meat, causes it after a few lessons to abandon the vicious habit.



Camel of the Haouran.

The Arabs count two principal races of horses, the *nejdis* and the *kehls*. The pure *nejdi* race is in the possession of the Arabs of the Hedjaz and of Yemen. It is divided into seven main branches, and a multitude of secondary.

The race of *kehls* is found in Syria, and exists in all its purity among the Bedouins of the Syrian desert. It is divided into three principal breeds (others reckon five), which are exceedingly prized by the Arabs when they are free from all cross; and these three again ramify into a multitude of subdivisions more or less esteemed.

The first of the three breeds is that of *Aboo—Arkoob—Shaoui*, "the Shaoui stock, father of the ham," the origin of which name is thus recounted by the Bedouins. Once upon a time Shaoui, the chief of an Arab tribe, was master of a thorough-bred kehl mare, which had brought him a filly some days before his tribe was defeated in a sanguinary engagement with that of the Haddidinns. Obliged to fly for his life, but not choosing to let his enemies possess his high-bred filly, Shaoui pierced it repeatedly with his lance, and one of the wounds was inflicted on the young animal's ham. After a gallop of three hours the fugitive chief halted and lay down to sleep; and when he awoke he saw his filly stretched on the ground by the side of its dam; it had retained strength enough to drag itself to that spot to die. Long and bitter were Shaoui's tears, says the Arab legend, for the loss of so precious an animal: all the Arabs purchased from him, at enormous prices, the subsequent offspring of his mare, which became the dam of the renowned stock surnamed *father of the ham.*

The second stock is the *Shoehman saba*, or Shoehman's swimmers, so called because when that Arab was pursued by ten foes, and all retreat appeared to be cut off, his mare, prompted only by her own sagacity, plunged voluntarily into the sea (the Persian Gulf), and swam for two hours till she reached a small island, where Shoehman found an asylum, and where he erected a monument over the remains of the faithful animal, when it perished some years afterwards by the lances of his enemies.

The third branch of the race of kehls is that of *Sacklawi-Gidrani*, the story of which would almost make a volume full of the most romantic interest. The name bestowed by an Arab on his horse never has any special reference to the animal's pedigree, but is taken from some particular in its own individual history or character; *e. g.*—The Golden, the Flying Mare, the Mare foaled by the palm brook, &c., and its reputation rests only on its deeds; it is renowned, not because it is the get of this or that sire, but because its exploits are in the mouths of all the tribes. The question has often been asked, Do the Bedouins keep registers of their horses' pedigrees? This appears to be satisfactorily answered by Burckhardt, who says that in the interior of the Desert the Bedouins never refer to any such thing among themselves; for they as well know the genealogy of their horses as they do that of the owners. But when they take their horses to market at any town, such as Basra, Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Medinah, or Mecca, they carry along with them a written pedigree, which they present to the purchaser; and it is only on such occasions that a Bedouin is found to possess the written pedigree of his horse; while on the other hand in the interior of the Desert itself he would laugh at being asked for such a document.

The Arabs, according to the same author, are ignorant of those frauds by which a European jockey deceives a purchaser; one may take a horse on their word at first sight or trial, without any risk of being cheated; but few of them know how to ascertain a horse's age by its teeth. "I once looked," he says, "into the mouth of a mare whose owner and many other Arabs were present: at first it was apprehended that I was practising some secret charm, and when the owner heard that by such inspection the mare's age

might be ascertained, he seemed astonished, and wished that I should tell his own age by an examination of his teeth."

The Arabs believe that some horses are predestined to evil accidents, and, like the Osmanlys, they think that the owners of other horses must sooner or later experience certain misfortunes, which are indicated by particular marks on the animals' bodies. Thus if a mare has a star on the right side of the neck, they believe she is destined to be killed by a lance; if the star be on the shank bones, the owner's wife, they think, will prove unfaithful to her husband, and the orthodoxy of the latter as a Mussulman is liable to suspicion. There are above twenty evil marks of this kind, which have at all events the bad effect of depreciating the horse's value by two-thirds or more.

Beauty still dwells in Gilead, though the wild boar out of the forest doth devour it, and El-Belka, the ancient Bashan, is rich in pasture and woodland; its noble oaks and its fine flocks and herds retain their old pre-eminence. Speaking of his journey through the mountains of Gilead Buckingham says, "We had no sooner passed the summit of the second range, going down a short distance on its eastern side by a very gentle descent, than we found ourselves on plains of nearly as high a level as the mountains or the hills themselves, and certainly eight hundred feet at least above the stream of the Jordan. The character too of the country was quite different from anything I had seen in Palestine, from my first landing in Soor to the present moment. We were now in a land of extraordinary richness, abounding with the most beautiful prospects, clothed with thick forests, varied with verdant slopes, and possessing extensive plains of a fine red soil, now covered with thistles as the best proof of its fertility, and yielding in nothing to the celebrated plains of Zabulon and Esdraelon in Galilee and Samaria.

"We continued our way to the north-east, through a country the beauty of which so surprised us that we often asked each other what were our sensations; as if to ascertain the reality of what we saw, and persuade each other, by mutual confessions of our delight, that the picture before us was not an optical delusion. The landscape alone, which varied at every turn, and gave us new beauties from every different point of view, was of itself worth all the pains of an excursion to the eastward of the Jordan to obtain a sight of it; and the park-like scenes that sometimes softened the romantic wildness of the general character as a whole, reminded us of similar spots in less neglected lands."

Lord Lindsay found the wood scenery spoken of in such high terms by Buckingham, Irby and Mangles, &c. begin to appear about a quarter of an hour after leaving Naimi for Jerash—trees thinly scattered at first, but which soon became numerous; and the road thenceforward was extremely pretty, winding over hills and through vales and narrow rocky ravines, overhung with the valonidi oak and other beautiful trees of unknown kind ... "Between Assalt and El-Hussn the scenery is most lovely. We crossed the Gebel Gilad, the ancient Mount Gilead, at its western extremity, where it takes the name of Gebel Osha from the prophet (as they consider him) Joshua, whose tomb we saw in a mosque on the summit of the mountain where we encamped

that night. The tomb is a long narrow trough, about twenty-five or thirty feet long (the prophet's traditional stature), but not more than three broad, screened by a rail, covered with a dirty cloth and filled near the aperture with votive offerings. The view from Gebel Osha was by far the grandest we had seen in the Holy Land; it burst upon us unexpectedly, after about an hour and twenty minutes' ascent from Assalt: we had no idea we were on such elevated ground; the whole country lay before us as far as the Jordan, and the lofty mountains beyond it, the Jordan winding his way through the Ghor at the distance of about fifteen miles as the crow flies; at least thirty miles of his course must have been within our view.

"It is almost a continuous descent from the tomb of Osha to the foot of Gebel Ajeloon, and every minute introduces you to some new scene of loveliness. I fancied I distinguished three stages in Mount Gilead—the upper chiefly productive of the prickly oak and arbutus; the central, of prickly oak, arbutus, and fir; the lower, gently sloping northwards, of prickly oak and valonidis. The path wound through thickets of the most luxuriant growth, and of every shade of verdure, frequently overshadowing the road and diffusing a delicious coolness, though a delightful fresh breeze so allayed the heat that it was never oppressive; while the cooing of wood pigeons, the calling of partridges—magnificent birds, as large as pheasants—the incessant hum of insects and hiss of grasshoppers singing in the trees as happy as kings, after breakfasting on the dews of Mount Gilead—and the thought that gave zest to it all, that this *was* Mount Gilead, made up a full cup of enjoyment, which I did quaff with my very soul.

"A gentle slope, about an hour in length, intervenes between the foot of Mount Gilead and the last steep descent to the Zerka, or ancient Jabbok: there the valonidis, the last tree that forsook us as we descended, ceased almost entirely. Gebel Ajeloon was a very grand object, as we began the descent of the river; its lower edges thickly dotted with trees, the upper and more northerly, which we soon lost sight of, quite black with them. The Jabbok flows here in a deep ravine, between the lower ridges of Gebel Ajeloon on the north and Gebel Gilad on the south. It is a rapid stream, but not clear, nor deeper than the horses' knees—shaded with tall reeds, willows, and oleanders. This was the ancient boundary between Ammon, the country of Sihon, King of the Amorites, and that of Og, King of Bashan. It was on the banks of this river that, previous to the affecting interview with Esau, Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant until the ascent of the morning, and received his new name of Israel."

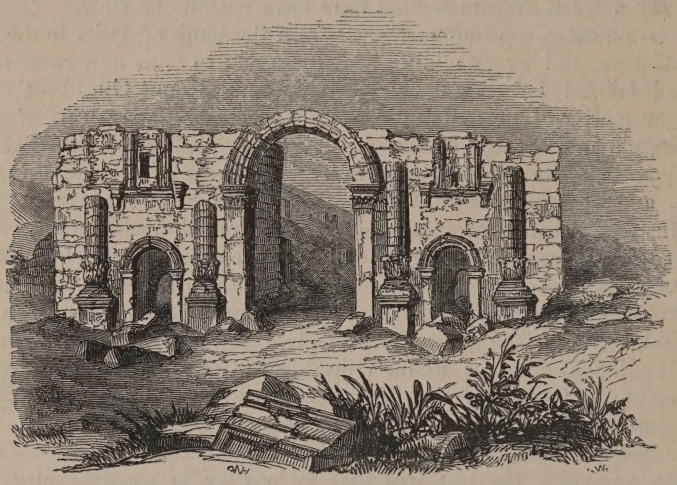
So much for the natural features of the country. As for the remains of its many great cities, it would be tedious to describe them all in detail: we shall merely make a passing allusion to Ammon, now, in the words of prophecy, a stable for camels, and a couching place for flocks, and proceed to give some account of Jerash.

On the summit of a hill whose base is washed by a beautiful little stream, thickly shaded by tall oleanders, stand many ruins, conspicuous among which is a spacious oval colonnade,* forming the termination of the principal street

* See *ante*, p. 436.

to Jerash, and once probably its forum. On still higher ground towards the south-west are the remains of a fine temple, once surrounded by a peristyle of Corinthian columns, of which one only, and that broken, remains erect.

Close to the temple stands a theatre in excellent preservation, the seats often quite perfect for many rows together; there are thirty rows: the galleries are now converted into the private dwellings of the Arabs. A large circus, without the south-west gate, and beyond it the remains of a large heavy triumphal arch, are the only other objects worth notice in this direction.

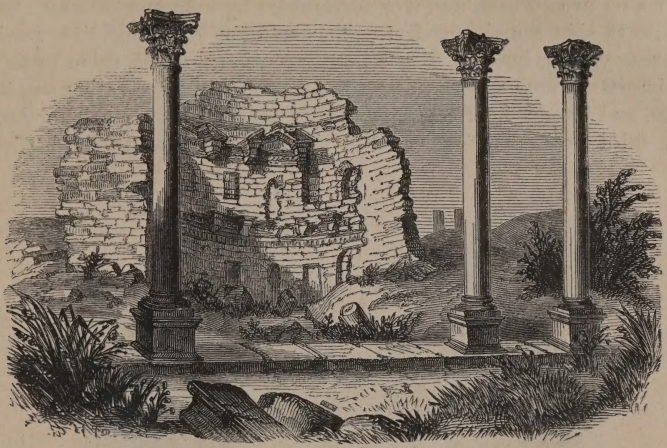


Triumphal Arch. Jerash.

Returning from this point to the oval colonnade along the principal street, lined with Corinthian columns, we come to an intersecting street that runs down to the river eastward of the town. At the point of intersection stand four square pedestals, ornamented with niches for busts on each side, and once probably surmounted by pillars or statues. The cross-street leads to a bridge; and on the other side of the river (where a suburb seems to have been built) stands a very large Christian church, and the ruins of a temple. Proceeding along the principal street we come to a semicircular recess on the left, of very rich architecture, but much injured; probably an ancient temple, as four fine columns, much loftier than their neighbours, stand in front of it. An inscription bears the name of M. Aurelius Antoninus.

Whilst I was endeavouring to decipher the half-effaced letters, the Bedouin guide, who had been watching me for some time, approached, and seizing my arm with one hand, and raising the other up to heaven, to indicate that there was no other witness besides God and ourselves, begged me to tell him if I had found a treasure, and if so, it would be a solemn secret between us. Of course he was not satisfied with the answer I gave him, and he evinced his displeasure in a variety of ways. It is a general opinion among the people that inscriptions indicate hidden treasure, and that by reading, or

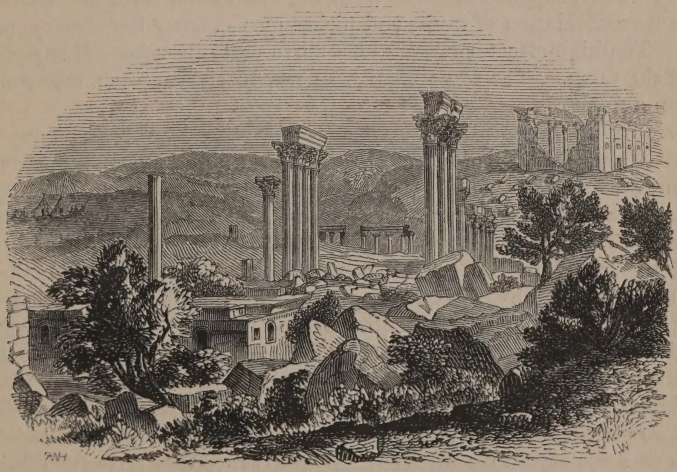
copying them, a knowledge is obtained where the treasure lies. I often confuted this opinion with success, by simply asking them whether, if they chose



Part of the principal street of Jerash.

to hide their money under ground, they would be so imprudent as to inform strangers where it lay. The opinion, however, is too strongly rooted in the minds of many of the country people to yield to argument.*

Further on, still to the left of the street, are the remains of the temple of

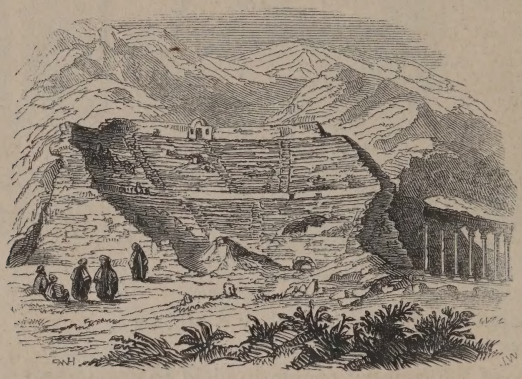


Jerash. Great Temple from the Colonnade.

Baal, or the Sun, the principal edifice of Jerash. It is a very handsome building; the pediments and friezes are particularly rich. Its great size

* G. Robinson. Burckhardt.

may still be traced; the cella measures eighty feet by sixty-five, and its walls are quite plain within and without. It stood in the centre of a large court, facing nearly east, and was surrounded by columns, of which only two on the north side remain perfect. The columns of the portico are in very good preservation, but not of the best execution; one of them rocks visibly in the breeze. Near the temple there is another theatre rather smaller than the first, and intended for combats of wild beasts. From a colonnade in front of it a third cross-street goes off to the river, meeting the high-street at a

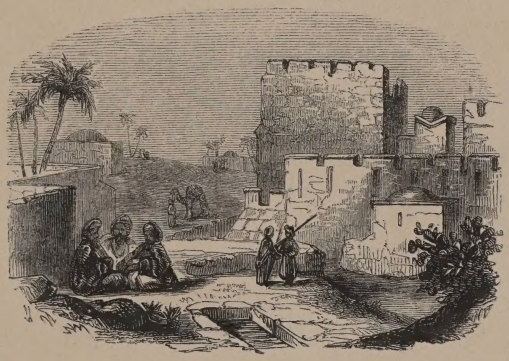


Amphitheatre of Jerash.

rotunda, which has suffered much from the last earthquake, and ending in an immense accumulation of vaults and niches overhanging the stream, probably baths. The high-street runs on in a north-east direction till it ends at the gate of the town. The town itself was nearly square, each side something less than a mile.

"Here ended our explorations," says Lord Lindsay, "and now for the result. I am glad I have seen Jerash, and think it well worth visiting, but confess it fell far short of my expectations. No one building gave me the idea of perfect grandeur or perfect beauty; there is none that stamps itself on the memory and the affections; the conception and execution of the ruins in general are poor, without dignity or grace; the eye is perpetually offended by want of harmony and proportion,—capitals too large or too small for their shafts, shafts sloping too suddenly to their capitals, and others next to them in the same building maintaining the same stumpy thickness throughout; while in the colonnade of the principal street, columns of different sizes are united in the same row, and those on the opposite sides of the street do not face each other. The Ionic oval colonnade is pretty enough as a whole, but the pillars in themselves are very poor and diminutive. The sculptures of the recess or temple in the high-street, and the frieze of the propylon of the great temple are certainly very rich, but neither gave me the delight I expected. The theatre, indeed, pleased me most of all the monuments of Jerash. I cannot conceive how any one could have named it on the same day with Palmyra. I should call Jerash a very fair specimen of a second-rate

provincial Roman town, and such Pella was, the town the Christians fled to on the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and with which Jerash seems much more identifiable than with Gerasa, similar as are the names; for Gerasa lay to the east of the Sea of Galilee. And if Jerash *be* Pella, what an interesting place would it be to the Christian pilgrim, even were the site as bare as that of Jerusalem herself, after the ploughshare of Terentius Rufus had torn up her very foundations!"



THE END.

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